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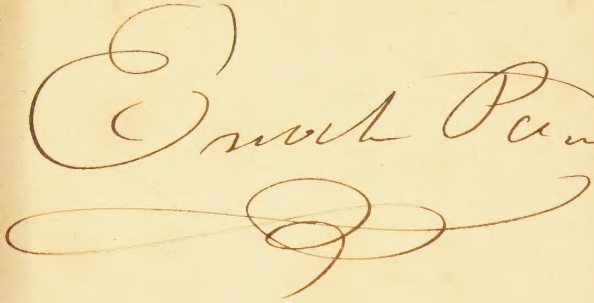

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THE

SINNER'S FRIEND.

OR

THE DISEASE OF SIN, ITS CONSEQUENCES, AND THE REMEDY.

"Who comes this way, behold, and fear to sin!"
COURSE OF TIME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "PLEASANT WAY."

Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and revised by the Committee of Publication.

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PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

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DESIGN OF THIS BOOK.

When we open a book, it is natural for us, in the first place, to inquire into its *design*. The design of the little volume now before you is simple, and may be explained in one sentence. It is intended to make the reader acquainted with sin,—its nature, its consequences in this life, and its punishment in the world to come; and also to point out the way to escape from its dominion. Like the word of God itself, the prominent themes here introduced are *sin* and *salvation;* and the evils of the one are employed to induce the acceptance of the other.

It is unnecessary that any thing should here be said as to the importance of these subjects; but the defective and superficial views which even adult persons frequently entertain of them, show that they are not sufficiently attended to.

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Before those who fall into these mistaken notions can be brought into the fold of Christ, their error must be exposed, and the light permitted to shine into their hearts. They must understand what sin is, and realize deeply that it is an evil and a bitter thing, before they can rightly discern the way of salvation, and feel the importance of a change of heart. The disease must be known, before the remedy can be applied or appreciated.

To the youth in our Sabbath schools, especially those more advanced in years, I send forth this book, hoping that it will not only assist them in estimating the depravity of their hearts, and understanding the dreadful penalty of sin, but that it will also aid them in coming to Christ for salvation; and to them it is committed with greater pleasure, from the fact that it may be said to have originated in the Sabbath school; as the subject was suggested to the writer, a year or two since, by one of the lessons of a Bible class with which he was connected. That it may be kindly received, and faithfully read, and become the humble means of good to many youth, is the earnest desire of

THE AUTHOR.

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I.

SIN AND THE SINNER.

REMARKS.

Before we examine into the consequences of sin, there are one or two things which need to be understood. First, we must have a correct idea of what sin is; and then we must know how far we ourselves are sinners before God, and whether our guilt is slight and unimportant, or deep and serious. The three following chapters are intended to give the true definition of sin, and to prove and illustrate the fact that all men are sinners,

SIN AND THE SINNER.

CHAPTER I.

SIN, THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.

Universality of law—Natural laws must be obeyed, or the penalty suffered—The moral law; its wisdom, holiness, justice, and glorious perfection—Its vast importance learned from its penalty—Man's efforts to destroy its penalty—Sin, the transgression of this law—Disobedience of the fallen angels, and of our first parents—The aggravated nature of sin—Its tendency to destroy all good—The two families—But one kind of sin—Appeal to the reader.

It is one of the wonderful perfections of God, that every material object in the universe, so far as man can discern, is governed by firm and unalterable laws. The rolling of a planet in its course, and the falling of a leaf to the ground,—the shining of the sun, and the opening of a flower,—the heaving of the waves of the ocean, and the trembling of

a spear of grass, are all the effects of established laws, under the control of the Almighty. The dominion of law is universal and eternal; her throne was established ere the oldest star began to shine, or the first angel sang the Creator's praise. To use the language of Dr. Hooker, "Her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the very greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all, with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

The *natural laws*,—by which are meant those which relate to matter,—doubtless extend to all parts of the universe; nor can any power set them aside, without the permission of him who ordained them. The great and the small, the high and the low, all submit to them. The sun, for instance, while it directs and controls numerous other smaller bodies, itself owns a greater law, and

obeys. As to those laws which relate more directly to ourselves, we all know that it is impossible to break them, without suffering in consequence. If you throw yourself from a high precipice, you will receive an injury, and, perhaps, lose your life. And why? Because you disregard the law of gravitation, which causes all bodies, not supported, to fall to the earth. So, if you break any of the laws of your nature, you must bear the penalty. Nearly all our bodily suffering may be traced to some violation of these laws.

But the Creator has established another and far more important law than any of these, to govern *mind*, which he has wisely adapted to his intelligent creatures. Like a faithful parent, who governs his household by wise regulations, God has ordained one perfect law, and by it every mortal being must stand or fall. This law is divided into two parts, and expressed by our Saviour in the following words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the

second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mark 12: 30, 31. This law is expressed more in detail in the ten commandments, but it is still the same; and in the history of our Saviour we have a perfect exhibition of it, in real life. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Peter 2: 22.

Like all the other laws of God, this law deserves as well as demands obedience. It was ordained by a wise and holy Being, and it therefore possesses both wisdom and holiness. "The law of the Lord is perfect, . . . the statutes of the Lord are right." Ps. 19: 7, 8. It is a just and reasonable law. God asks only for the love and obedience of his creatures; and is not this reasonable? It is a glorious law, honoring God, and exhibiting his infinite perfection to all the universe. It is a blessed law, conferring unmingled happiness on all who obey it; "and in keeping of it there is great reward." Ps. 19: 11. And it is a universal law, enjoined upon every reasonable soul. What more can be desired? Of what earthly law can all this

be said? The laws of a single nation, or state, or city, occupy hundreds of pages, and can be read but by comparatively few; but God's law is comprised in a sentence, and is found written upon the heart of every individual, except where sin has mutilated or obliterated it. Human laws need to be frequently revised and amended, and after all, do not fully answer their object; but the law of God can never be improved, or become unnecessary and useless.

Think, too, of the vast importance of this law. It is of no trifling or ordinary value, to be broken with impunity. There is attached to it a dreadful penalty, to be suffered by the disobedient, which can teach us its importance in the sight of God more than any thing else. This penalty is eternal banishment from the presence of Jehovah, and all holy beings, and confinement in wo, and darkness, and despair. This is not merely the punishment of repeated and desperate transgressions, but of each and every sinner, who has violated this law in the least. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one

point, he is guilty of all." James 2: 10. See, then, its importance; for God would not guard it with such a penalty as this, if it were not of the utmost consequence to the universe.

Some, I know, attempt to destroy its penalty, and seem to imagine that no account will ever be required of them. But such have fallen into a frightful error. What right has sinful man to alter the law of God? Who has appointed him to revise and correct it? If our government should send its code of criminal laws to the State prison, to be revised and interpreted, it would, doubtless, be treated in the same manner that certain classes have treated the law of God. All the penalties would be stricken out, or else each statute would be accompanied with explanations so ingenious and sophistical, that every one of them might be violated with impunity. But, though men may mutilate the holy law of God, yet the Judge himself shall one day vindicate it before the universe, and cause every soul to own the justice of its penalty.

Such is a faint view of the perfection of the moral law of God. And now, if my readers can form any adequate idea of its holiness, its justice, and its importance, or of the exalted character of that Being who is its author and defender, they will be able to obtain a comparatively just conception of sin. "For sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3: 4. There were once spirits in heaven, ages long since past, who, in an evil moment, ventured to trample upon this law; but offended Justice quickly hurled the rebels from their lofty spheres, and they have ever since wandered in darkness and chains. Our first parents also attacked it; and no sooner had they done so, than sorrow, pain and death were declared to be the lot of both themselves and their posterity, as we shall see in the succeeding chapter. This is sin, and nothing more or less. It is direct *rebellion* against God. He who wilfully breaks the laws of his sovereign is called a rebel and an enemy. The child who sets at nought the laws of his parents is not less a rebel. How much more, then, is he who breaks the

laws of that Being who is both our king and our Father! Every sin he commits is an act of rebellion. Every transgression of the law is a blow aimed at the empire of God. What high-handed rebellion would it be, were a subject to tear in pieces the laws of his sovereign before his face, and cast them from him! Yet this is, in effect, what every sinner does before his Creator. And if given up to the full dominion of his rebellious feelings, he would heartily wish and rejoice to dethrone Jehovah, and exalt some malignant spirit over his boundless dominions, if, indeed, any one would be permitted to rule the rest. The tendency of sin is to destroy all good. As the law is the guardian of every thing good, sin must be the enemy of all good. We say, therefore, that sin, if unrestrained, would destroy every thing in creation that is fair, and lovely, and holy. More than this, it would introduce anarchy where all is now quietness and order; terror, where all is peace and joy; and numberless and nameless evils, where now nothing but holiness and happiness are known. Look at an illustra-

tion. Here is a Christian family, where strict obedience is enforced to the commands of the parents, and that obedience is cheerfully and affectionately rendered by the children. What a happy family! All is peace, and harmony, and love. And how is that father honored because of his children! But there is another family, where there is no law, and no discipline, or where the children transgress the commands of their parents with impunity. What an unhappy sight! There is contention, and wrangling, and unhappiness, and but little, if any, real love. Those parents are dishonored in their children.

So with the law of God. Wherever it is obeyed, all is order, and peace, and joy, and love. God is honored in the keeping of his law; but when it is broken, there can be no true happiness, nor love, nor union. God is dishonored by his rebelling children.

But the question may here be asked, Is there not more than one kind of sin? Is all sin transgression of the law, and deserving of endless death? I have before me a Roman Catholic catechism, recently published in this

city, which speaks of two kinds of sin; one *mortal*, "which kills the soul, and deserves hell;" the other *venial*, "which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God." This is a strange distinction. I have found nothing like it in the Bible. That book teaches that there is but one kind of sin,—the transgression of the moral law, whether by deed, word or thought; and the Papists, doubtless, fell into their error by forgetting that God looks upon the *heart*, as well as the outward conduct. How absurd the thought, that the law may be so broken as to displease God, and yet its penalty not be incurred! True, the spirit of human laws may sometimes be broken, while the letter is obeyed, and the offender may escape punishment. But not so with God's law. That requires holiness of heart, as well as outward service; and it is impossible to break the spirit of it, without also breaking the letter.

Do not, then, my reader, esteem sin as of little consequence. It is a great, a terrible evil; or, as I should say, it is *the* great evil, for there is no other. Every action, every

word, yes, and every thought, that is contrary to the law of God, should awaken our fears, and call forth our hatred. It is sin,—that evil and bitter thing, that deadly disease, that blighting curse, that fatal destroyer. Sin! what a tale of wo and evil that one word unfolds! What bitter recollections and mournful feelings it awakens in our minds! What fearful forebodings of the future does it stir up within us, if our souls have never been washed from the guilty stain!

CHAPTER II.

MAN IS A SINNER.

The petrified forests—Evidences of a change in them—Petrifaction of the human heart—Supposed visit of an angel to earth—His disappointment and surprise—The mystery solved—Sin the cause of our present state—Man created holy—His obedience to the law, and happiness—A test given—His fall and ruin—How we are affected by the fall of Adam—Sin never yet been banished from the world—Its curse felt by every individual—Picture of man from the Bible—First chapter of Romans—Other passages—Testimony of ancient saints—Of Christ and the early Christians—Not a sinless man mentioned in the Bible.

Travellers in Egypt, in exploring that interesting land, have discovered, in different places, several large forests of trees, which have undergone the process of petrifaction, or been changed from wood to stone. In some places, they tell us, may be seen valleys of sand, extending over hundreds of acres, thickly strewn with prostrate trees, no longer clothed with green foliage, but converted into solid stone. Now, suppose one of us should

suddenly find himself in one of these strange forests, without having had any previous knowledge of their existence, or of the process by which wood is converted to stone. His first surprise beginning to subside, he examines carefully the branches, trunks, roots and bark, but they are all stone. "Can it be that they grew so?" he inquires. After farther examination, and a little reflection, he finds ample proof that there has been a great change wrought in the forest, at an unknown point of time, and is satisfied that these trees once possessed the common properties and nature of all other trees. He now begins to inquire into the cause of this transformation, the time it occurred, &c.

Equally certain is it that *man* was not originally created as he is now. He, too, has undergone a process, resembling that described above, which, to use the expressive figure of Scripture, has changed his heart from flesh to stone. "Yea," saith the prophet, "they made their hearts as an *adamant stone*." Zech. 7: 12. Where now is the love that dwelt in his heart, when it

beat in sympathy with all holy beings? Alas, hatred has supplanted it,—hatred to God, and to holiness. Where is the pure benevolence that pervaded his soul in its sinlessness, and shed its fragrance all around him? Base selfishness has usurped its place, and filled the earth with wretchedness and sorrow. Where, too, is the heavenly peace that reigned in his bosom? Alas, discord and confusion have long revelled in its place. And where is the joy and blessedness that lit up his countenance with smiles, and sprang from a heart at peace with God? In vain we seek it now; for unhappiness, and restlessness, and care, are the portion of man. All is changed; and the stony heart, the selfish passions, the depraved appetites, are but so many witnesses to this sad truth. Indeed, there can be no more doubt of this, than that the petrified forests of Egypt have been transformed from their original state; and if any one denies this change, he is not less foolish and mistaken than if he should contend that those trees *grew* stone, and always were stone.

We who are so well accustomed to our present fallen state, and so little acquainted with the condition of holy beings, can hardly appreciate the greatness of the change man has suffered. We know from experience what *sin* is, but of holiness we are comparatively ignorant; and, therefore, our present state is not to us so striking a proof of a former change as it otherwise would be. But let us endeavor to imagine, for a few moments, how man's present condition would appear to a holy being, who had never before witnessed the blighting effects of sin. Suppose an inhabitant of one of those distant worlds, which a clear evening reveals, should wander to our globe. With curious eye he gazes downward, as he approaches, and with a heart burning with love to God, he joyfully anticipates mingling his song of praise with that of his new acquaintances. But as he alights from his long journey, what a chill comes over him! We will imagine that he has descended in the vicinity of a battle-field, where contending hosts are marshalled for the contest. As death and destruction are

dealt out with a mighty hand, and the wave of devastation is rolled over quiet villages, and fruitful fields, and pleasant valleys, what consternation is seen in his looks! With haste he speeds away, beyond the shout of battle, or the roar of cannon. But what meets he now? A prison! Its frowning walls, and gloomy dungeons, and sickly, morose and wretched inmates, strike terror to the wanderer, and he is seen there no more. Now behold him at the couch of pain and wo, and now in the very presence of death, in some one of his terrible forms. How does he shrink from the sight! "O," he exclaims, "who shall tell me the meaning of this? I have seen many of the noble creations of God, but never conceived of one like this. Here is a world of beauty, like my own home, with a bright sky, and a glorious sun; but instead of my own native songs of praise, I hear groans, and sighs, and words of hatred. Can it be that God made this world as I now behold it? or has it been visited by some malign spirit, who has seduced its inhabitants, and given them death and wo as

their portion?" Would the wondering stranger long seek an answer to these questions? Doubtless he would not. He would soon discover that this world was not created as it is now, and that man is not what he was originally designed to be.

I therefore repeat it, we are certain that a momentous change has taken place in this world, which has converted man from a happy being to an unhappy one. But what is this change, and what produced it? Why is it that ills of every kind surround and envelop us? Does all this happen without a cause? Certainly not. "As the bird by wandering, and the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come." Prov. 26: 2. There must be a grand cause for the evil and misery we find in the world; and that cause is *sin*. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Eccl. 7: 29. Here the mystery is unravelled. Man has broken the law of God; and no wonder that he is exposed to so many ills.

We learn from the Bible, that man was created in the image of God; that is, he was endowed with faculties and attributes that made him resemble, though faintly, his great Creator, and rendered him reasonable, accountable and immortal. Some, I know, have pretended to believe that man is an exalted order of the brute creation, rather than a fallen image of God. But all who believe the Bible, are satisfied that man was created upright and happy; and many others, on whom the light of revelation never shone, have also taught the same truth. Says an inspired writer, "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hand." Heb. 2: 7. The moral law, spoken of in the previous chapter, was given to him, though not in a written form, as we now have it. It was enstamped upon his heart, as it is upon the hearts of holy angels. He needed no teacher to tell him that he must love the Lord with all his heart, for he knew this, the moment he came into existence. With his first breath he began to

obey this great law. Then he was holy and happy, and every blessing was his. In the language of Hesiod, an ancient heathen writer, "The fruits of the earth sprang up spontaneously; peace reigned; her companions were happiness and pleasure; disease and death were unknown." Happy Adam! Himself bore the image of his glorious Creator, and his home was a paradise. What needed he to make him blessed?

But Adam, though innocent, was not yet *confirmed* in holiness. He was created upright, but was not compelled to be either sinful or holy. His Maker, in the language of Milton,

> "made him just and right,
> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall."

He must, therefore, be put upon probation. So the Lord determined to give him a test, or trial, by which it might be for ever decided whether he would stand or fall. This test was a simple command not to eat of a certain tree. How easy to pass through the trial unharmed! No great work was demanded,

no painful sacrifice was required; he was only directed to abstain from one kind of fruit, while every thing else his appetite could desire was freely offered him. But he disobeyed that one command,—he fell,—and Satan's foul design was accomplished. A curse upon the tempter and upon the earth ensued, and the unhappy pair, with their posterity, were doomed to a life of toil and sorrow, and finally to death. The gate of their beautiful paradise was closed upon them, and they left it, never again to behold its pleasant groves, its fragrant bowers, or its sparkling waters.

Thus, at one blow, was shattered, and well nigh ruined, the delicate lyre, which, tuned by the finger of God, once sweetly vibrated to every breath of the divine Spirit. Like the famous Egyptian statue, which always greeted the rising sun with melodious sounds, these happy souls once responded in strains of love and praise to every ray of wisdom, power and goodness which emanated from the great Sun of righteousness.

"But short, alas, the song that sings their bliss!"

Now, only jarring notes of discord and sorrow were heard. Then began they to realize the curse of sin, though in their case the Lord, "pitying while he judged," was pleased to mingle with it many mercies.

Such, reader, was the fall of man, and the introduction of sin into our world. True, these events took place almost six thousand years ago. Yet we ought to feel a deep interest in them, for they have exerted a vast influence upon our destiny. Since the dreadful day of Adam's fall, sin has stalked through the earth, carrying with it an endless train of evil and misery. It must needs be that we experience these evils, for Adam was our father, and we inherit his corrupt nature, as well as his mental and physical powers. He is compared, by Irenæus, to "one who, being incarcerated, propagates a race in prison." But, though this comparison is substantially correct, yet God, in great kindness, has left us many pleasant, sunny places, that remind us of ancient Eden, rather than a dungeon; and has conferred upon us many other noble gifts and privileges, that ally us to angels,

rather than to the chained spirits of the prison-house. Still, he never ceases to remind us that sin has been here, and is here now. There is truth in that couplet:

> "Some flowerets of Eden ye still inherit,
> But the trail of the serpent is over them all."

The blighting effects of sin meet us at every step, and compel us to acknowledge that we belong to "a crooked and perverse generation." This curse has reached every individual of our race. True, there is such a vast difference in mankind, that one would hardly imagine they all sprang from one parent. Some are exalted to fill thrones, and sway sceptres over half the world, and others are born in servitude; some are gifted with remarkable talents, and others discover but little mental energy; some, who have never done a day's work, are burdened with riches, while others are the hard-worked children of hopeless poverty; some have constitutions of iron firmness, and others are so weak and helpless, that, even before they go hence, they are counted as dead;—but, for all these

differences, there is one thing in which each resembles his fellow,—all are sinners. The honorable and the mean, the wise and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, all, all are sinners, and all bear the curse of sin. All, therefore, descended from the same apostate father, and inherit the same corrupt nature.

We will now look into the Bible, and see what farther knowledge we can obtain of the dreadful character of sin. Let the reader turn to the last part of the first chapter of Romans. Here you will find a most vivid picture of the depravity of the natural heart, when unrestrained by the grace of God. And so true a one is it, that it is said to excite the astonishment of the heathen, when it is first presented to them. They are greatly surprised to read so accurate a description of their own sinfulness and degradation; and in some places, they have thought that this chapter must have been written by the missionaries, after they came to their country, and saw the wickedness of paganism. Their consciences convicted them, and thus con-

firmed the inspired word. In the chapter I have referred to, Paul describes the Gentiles as "being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affections, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." What a dark view is this of the unfathomed malignity of sin, when it has full possession of the human heart! Who, after reading the above verses, will wonder that God abhors it, and regards it as no trifling evil?

But there are numerous other passages, in every part of the Bible, that testify to this same truth. Job is supposed to have lived in a very early age of the world; and he describes the wicked men of his day as saying to their Maker, "Depart from us; for we

desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Job 21: 14. And one who was contemporary with him, confirms this, saying, "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water!" Job 15: 14–16. David says of the whole race of man, "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Ps. 14: 3. Even God's favored people became so degraded and dreadfully perverse, that they not only forsook the altar and temple of Jehovah, but "sacrificed their sons and their daughters,"—to whom?—"*unto devils.*" Ps. 106: 37. Says the prophet, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. 17: 9. This is the only instance in the Bible where the adverb "*desperately*" is used,—a word which has, perhaps, a fuller and more comprehensive meaning than we are apt to give it. The

heart is madly, furiously, hopelessly wicked, and treacherous, artful and fraudulent above all things. Who can know the extent of its iniquity?

But while these holy men of old describe others as being sinners, they never flatter themselves with the self-righteous thought that they are, by nature, better than others. David was a very pious man; but he says of himself, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me." Ps. 40: 12. So Daniel was an excellent man, beloved of God; but he confessed, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces." Dan. 9: 5, 7. Isaiah was one of the excellent of the earth; but he says, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do fade as the leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64: 6. And so the faithful Jeremiah con-

fessed himself a sinner, when he said, "We have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God." Jer. 3: 25. Solomon, too, discovered the same truth, and asks, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am free from my sin?" Prov. 20: 9. He found no one who could respond to this challenge, and he therefore boldly declares, that "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." Eccl. 7: 20.

In later times our Saviour affirmed, that from the heart of man "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Matt. 15: 19. One who received his religious instruction directly from him, has also said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1: 8. The apostle Paul, writing to the church in Ephesus, speaks of himself, and them also, as having been once by nature the children of wrath." And Barnabas, an early convert to Christianity, and the devoted companion of

Paul, adds weight to the same testimony, by saying, "Before we believed, the habitation of our hearts was full of corruption and sin; filled with idolatry, and a dwelling-place of demons."

I might thus multiply, almost without limit, quotations from the Bible, and the wisest and best men who have ever lived, to illustrate the depth of man's depravity. The Bible itself embraces a period of history extending through more than four thousand years; and it introduces to us a vast number of characters. But among them all, we do not find one who was not a sinner, with the exception of our Saviour. Had there been one else perfect, so remarkable a fact would surely have been noticed.

In the following chapter, this subject will be pursued still farther.

CHAPTER III.

DOMINION OF SIN.

The sculptor—No moral perfection in this world—The sinner often shuts his eyes to this truth—Illustrations of feeble views of sin—The mistake removed in eternity, or on the death-bed—Another self-righteous class—Anecdote of Dr. Hopkins—Danger of this class—Their mistake accounted for—The subjection of sin a difficult work—Sins of omission not to be forgotten—Guilt cannot always be concealed—A request—Children are sinners—Their corrupt nature—Tendency of their hearts to evil—A confession—Our sin voluntary, and exceedingly aggravated—Dreadful nature of sin—A serpent in the soul—Object of the writer—His encouragement—His wish.

A RENOWNED sculptor once declared, that he never saw a person whose features and form were, in all respects, a model of perfection. Hence, in making a cast or statue, he selected several individuals, and copied the face of one, the neck of another, the shoulders of another, &c.; and, thus uniting in one figure all that was beautiful in each, he was able to form a model surpassing in beauty

and grace any single work of nature. In the truth here developed, there seems to be some resemblance to the moral imperfection of men. It is, doubtless, true that there is not a perfect man on earth, whether we apply the remark to the inner or the outer man. But as some, who have very imperfect ideas of what constitutes perfection, would deny the assertion of the sculptor alluded to, so there are others, with still more superficial ideas, who deny that there is no *moral* perfection, and contend that some attain to sinlessness in this life. Though there is nothing more evident to reason and common sense than the simple proposition at the head of our last chapter, "Man is a sinner," yet it is difficult to convince them of this truth. It is an unwelcome truth, and they do not wish to meet it. It has always been thus. Christ and his apostles found it one of the most difficult of all their labors, to convince the world that they needed a Saviour. Though the mass of mankind then, as now, were poor, and miserable, and destitute of all true riches, yet they thought themselves rich, and

wanting nothing. It was insulting to the proud Jew, and folly to the polished Greek, and mad fanaticism to the idolatrous Roman, to point them to one who shed his blood for the remission of their sins. They needed no such Saviour as this; their lengthy rituals, and garlanded altars, and solemn rites, were sufficient for them. So is it with the pagan world at the present day. They do not and will not think themselves lost; if they did, Christ would be eagerly sought among them.

But why go so far for an illustration? Are there not those in Christian lands who have fallen into the same lamentable error? Ah, yes, among the vast phalanx of fallen, guilty, unpardoned men around us, who are pressing onward to another world, there are hosts of self-complacent, undisturbed souls, who see no necessity of a change of heart, and who vainly think to work out their own salvation, not with "fear and trembling," but with pride and boasting, to the exclusion of the cross of Christ.

"Lulled in a soft and fatal sleep,
They sin, and yet rejoice."

This strange infatuation often clings to its victim through a long life. But O, how dreadful it is to be deceived by a false hope of heaven, till the soul has entered into the presence of its Maker, and then, in the dazzling light of eternity, finds itself poor, and miserable, and lost;—like one who has been prematurely buried, and, while dreaming that he is in paradise, suddenly awakes from his trance, and finds the shroud of death wrapped around his body, and the earth-worm crawling upon him, and the cold damp of the grave chilling his life-blood. He may make a desperate struggle to free himself, but his feeble efforts avail nothing, and the earth sinks down upon him, till it crushes the last breath from his body, and the last hope from his soul.

Sometimes this delusion is removed on the death-bed, and the miserable soul feels its need of the blood of Christ, for the first time, while quivering on the outer verge of life. But alas, it is, we fear, generally too late to apply the remedy.

Besides the class I have described, there are others, who, practising many virtues and

observing the outward duties of religion, think they have at length attained to perfection, and can move through the world without being led into sin. But these also are mistaken, for there is no perfection here. Even those who walk nearest to their Saviour, and present before us the purest and holiest lives, are the first to feel their own utter sinfulness, and to sigh,

> "How oft, alas, this wretched heart
> Has wandered from the Lord!
> How oft my roving thoughts depart,
> Forgetful of his word."

The late Dr. Samuel Hopkins, having always maintained an irreproachable moral character, was received into the church in his native town, without having experienced a change of heart. He was then a member of Yale College, and maintained the habit of daily reading the Scriptures, and of secret prayer. So apparently holy and blameless was his life, that he writes of himself, respecting his evening devotions, "When I thought of confessing the sins that I had been guilty

of that day, and asking for pardon, I could not recollect that I had committed one." But a year or two after this, during a revival under the preaching of Rev. Gilbert Tennent, he discovered the entire depravity of his heart, and all his fancied righteousness at once departed. He saw his vileness in the sight of God, and hastened to the "fountain filled with blood," where he was purified and made a new man. From his writings, it would appear that he never afterwards experienced that peculiar difficulty in his devotions, though he was illustrious for his heavenly temper, and the purity of his life.

How many others have fallen into the same snare! By concealing the depravity of their hearts, or throwing over them the flimsy veil of their own righteousness, they at length begin to think themselves perfect, or, at least, not far from perfection. Their debt of ten thousand talents suddenly becomes but a few farthings, and this they calculate soon to pay. But let such persons bear in mind the old adage, "A fault concealed is a fault doubled." He is the most hopeless sinner

who not only hides his guilt from himself and his neighbors, but at the same time pretends to great piety. Said Flavel, "To have no holiness is bad enough; but to pretend to it, when we have it not, is double impiety."

Augustine, an ancient Christian, said, "A man does not feel the chain when he voluntarily follows him who leads him by it; but when he begins to resist, and go the other way, then he suffers,—the chain tightens and suffers violence." Here we see the reason why the self-righteous sinner is offended when told that his heart is desperately wicked. He is following the chain with which Satan leads him; and, till he attempts to go the other way, he can have no idea of the strength of sin, or of the power it has over his soul. I believe no impenitent sinner knows how difficult is the work of him who sincerely strives to subdue his sins. The writer well remembers his own feelings before he was led to test the strength of sin. In looking upon professors of religion, he thought he saw many blemishes in their characters, and was somewhat astonished at the sight;

and he then resolved that when he became a Christian, he would be a thorough one, and set a purer example, than many around him did. Alas, he knew but little, then, of the depravity of his own heart; nor was it until he set out in earnest to begin the new life, that he found how hard it was to stem the current of sin. Truly there is a meaning in that passage, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jer. 13: 23.

One difficulty with us all is this; in measuring our depravity, we are apt to look only for flagrant sins of *commission*, and entirely overlook those of *omission*. This is a great mistake. God does not overlook them. You have all read the solemn account of the last judgment, as given by Christ himself, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew; but did you ever notice, that those on whom the Lord pronounces the fearful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," are condemned solely on the ground of sins of omission? "Ye gave me no meat,—

ye gave me no drink,—ye took me not in,—ye clothed me not,—ye visited me not," says Christ; "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment." No comment need be made upon this.

It is beyond a doubt, then, that a perfect man exists not on earth. Be the life ever so pure and blameless, yet in the heart there is something wrong. Sin lurks there, even when not seen outwardly. It tarnishes the fairest virtues even of the best of men, and embitters their sweetest cup. But its effects upon the unrepenting sinner are far worse. He cannot for ever conceal the corruption that corrodes his soul. "As a fountain casteth out her waters," so the heart "casteth out her wickedness." Jer. 6: 7. His sin is "written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond." Jer. 17: 1. And unless it is acknowledged and condemned by the sinner, and blotted out by the blood of Christ, it will remain graven on the heart for ever. Reader, have you any doubt of this? Does this language appear to you too strong and sweeping? I ask you, then, to look at

your heart, and candidly examine it. Do this faithfully, and you need not go into society to know mankind, for you have seen the world. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Prov. 27: 19.

In what has been said on the depravity of our race, I have spoken only of *men*, as adults. But I would leave the impression on no mind that *children* are not sinners. Every child that comes into this world, brings with him a sinful heart, which, so soon as it is developed, will prove a stock of evil, from whence will spring many bitter fruits. Though he cannot be guilty of actual transgression till he is capable of understanding what is meant by right and wrong, yet he is not *holy*. You may find many lovely traits in the character of a little child, before he has become defiled by intercourse with bad companions; but there is no *holiness* there. He does not love God, and in time, even were no bad influence exerted upon him, he will show the strength of sin in his heart, and proclaim by his conduct that he has

> "No relish for the joys of heaven,
> No dread of endless misery."

But suppose you go farther than this, and not only remove bad influences, but place the child under the purest and holiest that earth ever knew. Will this save him? No, for he will not fail soon to discover the perverseness of his heart. This is a truth full of solemnity to us, as it places our depravity in a most serious light, and plainly shows us its strength and obstinacy. But some do not believe it. They declare that children are *not* corrupt by nature, and therefore that they need no conversion. They tell us that the infant soul will unfold itself as naturally and regularly as does the bud, and that the parent and teacher need only apply the light and heat, at the same time warding off the blights of sin, to bring it to the highest perfection. But will this bear the test of experiment? Where is the child, who has reached six or eight years, and showed no disposition to prefer evil to good? I fear it would be difficult to find such an one. We are told that the Lord once "looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek

God," but he found none, no, not one. Ps. 14: 2, 3. Moreover, the Bible declares that "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child;" Prov. 22: 15; that "they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies;" Ps. 58: 3; and Paul says, that "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3: 23. Does this encourage the opinion that children are pure, innocent, and free from corruption, and need only genial influences to develop their minds, and fit them for the church, without experiencing a gracious change? If such is the state of things at the present day, it certainly was not in the days of David and Paul.

But it is useless to deny or attempt to conceal our guilt, even if we are young. As well might the leper think to hide the plague spots on his face. We are sinners. Though God made us, we have not honored him; and though he has blessed us with mercies more numerous than our sins, yet we have not loved him. "Ye have said, it is vain to serve God." Mal. 3: 14. We are beset with temptations on every hand, and pollution

enters our souls through the eye, the ear, the taste and the touch. And let it never be forgotten that our sin is voluntary. We are not compelled to do wrong. "When the apostle had sketched that awful picture of the Gentile world, contained in Rom. 1, he wrote over it, 'Without excuse.'" How much more is this true of us!

How great, then, is our guilt! And especially how awful does it appear, when we remember the redeeming love of him who was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." The Jews who imbrued their hands in his blood, knew they were taking the life of an innocent person, and violating the laws of God and man; but alas, they knew not what they did,—they suspected not the tremendous guilt involved in that one act. So might it be truly said of each one of us who indulges in known sin,—*he knows not what he does.* We indeed know that we are sinning against God, and conscience may condemn us; but O, how little do we know of the dreadful nature of that sin! We rebel against our heavenly

Father,—we crucify the Son of God afresh, —we slay the Lord of the vineyard; and in our blindness and depravity we know it not, we believe it not, but regard our sin as too trifling for the serious notice of our Creator.

Need I tell you, then, young reader, that sin should awaken the utmost anxiety? True, its developments may now be feeble in your heart, and you may see no great reason for alarm. But there *is* abundant cause for alarm. "It is not the outward spot," says Andrew Fuller, "that will kill you, but the inward disease, whence it proceeds." The outward indications of the disease of your soul may now be few; but will you deceive yourself with the thought that for this reason, you are in no danger?

Yes, you *ought* to feel. How would it startle you to be informed that you carried within you a living reptile, which you had unwittingly swallowed in a glass of water, when it was too small for your eye to detect it. And as it grew, and increased, and gnawed a place for itself within your own vitals, and there intercepted the food you

took to nourish your body, thus prostrating your health, and subjecting you to violent spasms of agony, what terrible apprehensions would it awaken! But, my impenitent friend, there is a more dangerous and deadly serpent than this within you,—not tormenting your mortal body, but preying upon your immortal soul. That serpent, I need not tell you, is sin. It was once small and feeble, but every year of your life it has increased in strength, feeding, as it were, upon every thing good and noble within your soul. O, this is the worm whose merciless tooth gnaws through all eternity. Could you see the fearful ravages it has already made upon your soul, what horror and anxiety would the sight awaken! Could you look on that polluted soul as holy angels look upon it, or see its deformity as God does, and *realize* the danger to which you have exposed it, what bitter lamentations of wo would burst from your lips, and how would you plead and agonize at the foot of the cross, day and night, till you felt your pardon sealed, and your condemnation removed.

But such a view as this you can never obtain in the present world. It is my design, however, to bring you as near to it as possible, by portraying the evil consequences of sin, here and in eternity. I shall aim to represent faithfully the dark deformity of sin, and to hold up to your view, as in a sunbeam, the dreadful misery which it is capable of inflicting upon each one of us, if we do not forsake it. And especially am I encouraged in my task, by the thought that I am addressing the *young*,—those who know but little, experimentally, of the evils of sin. There is not a class of people on earth to whom this subject is so peculiarly adapted as to them. They may derive more profit from it than others possibly can. Then, dear reader, as you follow me through these pages, and trace the consequences of sin, and the final ruin of the sinner, will you not determine to profit by the lesson, and abandon a course so fraught with danger and death? O, that you might now be made wise unto salvation, and thus escape many of the dreadful punishments of sin here spoken of.

These pages will, doubtless, fall into the hands of some who are already becoming enchanted by the tempting fruits which sin holds out, to allure them from the paths of peace. If so, may they now realize that "their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps." Deut. 32: 32, 33. And if any are already entangled in the meshes of Satan, and are conscious that their feet tread a forbidden path, may they hear a voice in these pages, saying to them, "Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts." Jer. 2: 19.

II.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

REMARKS.

HAVING learned what sin is, and seen that man is a sinner, we are now ready to inquire into the evil consequences and punishments which sin brings with it. We shall have abundant illustration of the truth, "Thou hast *fallen* by thine iniquity." Hos. 14: 1. And we shall see that sin and misery, however distant and unconnected they sometimes appear, are always bound together by indissoluble chains. They never have been, and never can be long separated.

I would bespeak the reader's earnest attention to these chapters, because, though it may not be an inviting theme, yet it is one of vast importance, and one which may be highly useful, if rightly improved.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

CHAPTER I.

SIN DEPRIVES US OF GOD'S APPROBATION.

Love of approbation natural to man—Inconceivable value of God's approbation—Sin deprives us of it—Scripture proofs—This implies loss of communion with him—Loss of sympathy—Loss of the approbation of all good beings—The deserted dwelling—Man alone responsible for the loss of God's favor.

Love of approbation is a strong ingredient in our nature, and a great principle in God's government of man. Pleasure or pain is always imparted (until we have reached a certain degree in guilt) in accordance with the approbation or disapprobation in which we are held by the wise and virtuous. Who does not like to be justly commended by the good? and who does not dread to lose their approbation, by doing wrong? He who

cares not for the opinion of such, must be far advanced in the road to ruin. The wiser, the holier, or the more distinguished an individual is, the more is his approval sought for and prized; and were the holy angels occasionally to appear among us, in visible forms, their affection and good-will would be esteemed above rubies, at least by the more thoughtful and religious.

But there is a Being, infinitely above these in holiness and glory, the value of whose approbation is not to be computed by gold and precious gems, or even by worlds. It is above all price. The approbation of God,—who can comprehend the full weight of bliss and unspeakable glory which those words imply? We must all confess that we cannot grasp the thought. The favor of God is the summing up of all the happiness, and glory, and honor of which a created being is capable. And this is heaven. This divine approbation is the inheritance of the angels of light; it is the unalterable charter by which they will for ever hold the blessings they now enjoy. It was, likewise, the glorious birth-right of

our first ancestor. As he walked through Eden, in the cool of the day, feasting his senses with the numberless gifts of his Creator, and communing with him as a man converseth with his friend, he began to feel the bliss of such a connection. But alas! sin came and blasted it all. The moment he transgressed, this inestimable boon was no longer his; and as the flaming sword was unsheathed at the gate of paradise, he began to realize, in some measure, the fearful evil he had encountered. He then lost the approbation of his Maker; and we, my readers, have experienced the same loss, in a similar way. That we may realize this truth more deeply, I have collected a few of the many passages of Scripture which teach it.

"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold sin, and canst not look on iniquity." Hab. 1: 13. God is represented as so holy, that, to use a bold figure, he cannot even *look* upon sin, or endure the sight of it. How, then, can he look with complacency upon the sinner? "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your

sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear." Is. 59: 2. "Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath forsaken you." 2 Chron. 24: 20. Here we are directly taught that we have lost the approbation of God. "For the wickedness of their doings, I will drive them out of my house, and I will love them no more." Hos. 9: 15. "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Ex. 32: 33. "I will hide my face from them, and I will see what their end shall be." Deut. 32: 20. "The Lord is far from the wicked." Prov. 15: 29. "If ye forsake him, he will forsake you." 2 Chron. 15: 2.

These are but a few of the passages which teach us that we have lost the approval of God by our sins. But perhaps we do not apprehend the extent of this loss, from reading these verses; and that we may not remain in ignorance, let us examine it more closely, and see what it includes.

First, in losing the approbation and love of God, we lose *communion* with him. What would you do, were you told that after to-day

you were to be cut off for ever from all communion with the dearest earthly friend you have,—a mother, a father, a brother or a sister? What sorrow would such a thought strike to your soul! But have you ever mourned that you have lost the communion of God? Have you ever wept that your sins have separated between you and him, so that you cannot come to him for advice and instruction? I know that God, in his mercy, has been pleased to remove this evil, in a great degree, by opening a way of access to him, through Christ, and by giving us in his word all needful counsel and admonition. What love for ruined man does this display! But, reader, have these kind provisions of God been of any use to you? Are you not still shut off from all communion with him? Does he ever counsel and advise *you*? If you have never repented of sin, you can only answer, "No, I have no communion or fellowship with my Maker, and as to his counsels and advice, I have never troubled myself to find out what they are." And this is the fruit of *your* sin. I need not seek examples

from others, to make you understand this subject. Your own sins have debarred you from the communion of God, and shut your soul up to take counsel of itself, or of others equally liable to err. "As troubled water," says Boston, "is unfit to receive the image of the sun, so the heart filled with impure and disorderly affections, is not fit for divine communications." This is the state of your hearts. And how often have you suffered in consequence of it! Perhaps you have never thought of it in this light; but do you not now see, that if you had sought direction from God, and enjoyed communion with him, you would have been saved many a sad fall, and many a severe pain?

You should also remember, that in parting with the approbation of God, you lost, in a degree, his *sympathy*. True, he still cares for you, and blesses you with an untiring hand; but in your sorrows you cannot go to him for consolation and sympathy. Like every other sinner, you greatly need these blessings; but you have shut yourself out from them. His love is an overflowing

stream; but *you* cannot drink of it, till you consent to part with your sins. Should storms of adversity overtake you, you have no refuge to shield you. Should troubles rise around you, you have no arm on which to lean. You are unprepared for the trials of life. You have, as it were, shut yourself up in a dark prison, to escape the presence of him who alone can befriend you in your hour of distress.

"No balm that earthly plants distil
Can soothe the mourner's smart;
No mortal hand, with lenient skill,
Bind up the broken heart.
But One alone, who reigns above,
Our wo to joy can turn,
And light the lamp of joy and love,
That long has ceased to burn."

Thus every sinner, by losing the approval of God, also loses his sympathy, in a great degree, and is left to his own cold heart, or a still colder world, for comfort and support in every trial.

In losing the favor of God, you should remember that you have also lost the favor

of *all good beings*. Angels are full of love, but they cannot regard you with approbation, however much they may pity you. The spirits of just men made perfect are full of love, but their holy affection kindles not for you. If God does not approve and commend you, they cannot. In consequence of the plan of mercy, they earnestly desire to see you redeemed from sin; they feel a deep interest in your welfare. But if you contemn God, and reject his mercy, these holy beings will rise to condemn you at the last day. The children of God on earth, it is true, may and ought to love you, while here, that, if possible, they may save your soul. But as you go on in sin, and stop your ears to their warnings, and harden your heart, their love must wax fainter and fainter; and at last, if God shall give you up to your sins, the love of every good being will be for ever withdrawn. "Yea," says God to every sinner, "wo also to them when I depart from them!" Hos. 9: 12.

I have thus endeavored to show you what it is to be forsaken of God, or to lose his love

and favor. The sinner, thus left to himself, is indeed a mournful sight. He resembles some deserted building, in a solitary desert, once the abode of grandeur and wealth, but whose ruins are now the lurking places of offensive reptiles, and the shelter of the moping owl and bat. The glory has departed. "It is not so much," said Flavel, "to see all the stars in heaven overcast, as to see one sun eclipsed." No, nor is it so great a calamity to lose the friendship of all created beings, as to be deprived of the favor of God.

"Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown!
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

We see, then, that it is wholly our own fault, if we are shut out from the blessings of God's favor. His bounty is always abundant. Every thing in nature proves this. His mercy is "shed on us abundantly," and nothing but sin can cut us off from it. He ever follows us in our wayward course, crying out, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?

how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Hos. 11: 8. Even after we have long resisted him, if we will at last repent in sincerity, he will "abundantly pardon." We can only blame ourselves, then, if we finally lose the blessing of him whose favor is life everlasting.

CHAPTER II.

SIN PROVOKES THE WRATH OF GOD.

God will not let sinners alone—Meaning of the phrase, "wrath of God"—The terror of his wrath is greatly increased by his power—Figurative language—Consuming fire—The arrow—The sinner left in darkness—Drinking the cup of wrath—Illustrations from the Bible—No escape from this wrath—Application of the subject—The turning point of the incorrigible—The justice and mercy of God reconciled.

In the last chapter, we looked upon the sinner as losing the approbation of God; and we saw that this was a dreadful evil. But this is only the beginning of his punishment. God does not, after he has withdrawn his favor and affection, leave him to himself, to go on as he pleases, and cease to notice his conduct. In this case, it would be the same to him as if there were no God. Though sinners always desire that the Lord would let them alone, yet he will not do this. He "is *angry* with the wicked every day." Ps. 7:

11. He beholds every sin they commit; he even knows every sin they desire to commit, or that enters their thoughts. His hot displeasure is kindled against them for their evil deeds, and he warns them of an approaching doom, in language that ought to awaken their deepest fears. As they wander away from him, he pursues them, crying out, "Wo unto them! for they have fled from me; destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me." Hos. 7: 13. On every side the voice is echoed, "Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Is. 3: 11.

Every part of the Bible has much to say about the *wrath of God.* This is the burden of many of its chapters, and the principal theme of some of its entire books; for God has sent his servants into the world, from time to time, to proclaim his displeasure against sin, and warn the people of judgments to come. But in reading these passages, we should always remember that the wrath of God is not like the wrath of man. When we see a man angry, we generally think him

guilty of doing wrong. We are taught that this is a sinful emotion; and so it is, at least in most instances. But when we read that God is angry, we should form no such conception of it as this. His is a *righteous* anger. It is a holy indignation against sin, —that thing which he abhors; and nothing but sin can ever awaken it. It is not such anger as the heathen have ascribed to their gods, which is in reality malice, and can be appeased by the blood of its victim, or by costly gifts. We shall see that the wrath of God against sin is entirely unlike the wrath of any fabulous heathen deity. It is a righteous wrath; and on this account, it is most terrible to the wicked.

When we consider the *power* of God, we see the chief reason why his wrath is so terrible. A fellow-being may be greatly displeased with us, and yet be unable to injure us. The wrath of such is but little feared. Others have power to inflict evil upon us; and they are feared in proportion to this power. Were you living within the dominions of a despotic king, you would dread to

excite his displeasure. "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favor is as dew upon the grass." Prov. 19: 12. His favor, therefore, you would desire to possess. But if you fear the anger of an earthly being, who has power to inflict pain or death upon your body, should you not fear much more to kindle the wrath of him who is able to destroy both soul and body? Remember, too, that his wrath will not come empty and alone. "To me," he says, "belongeth vengeance and recompense." Deut. 32: 35. He has the power, and he will punish the sinner who hardens himself against him. He has declared that "their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god." Ps. 16: 4.

In speaking of the wrath of God, the sacred writers sometimes use bold and striking figures to illustrate their meaning. When Moses warned the ancient people of God against sin, he said unto them, "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." Deut. 4: 24. He also told the same people, when speaking of the idolatrous nations which they were to drive out from

the promised land, that "as a consuming fire the Lord would destroy them." Paul uses the same vivid figure, when he says, "For our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12: 29. What an idea of the terror of the wrath of God do these expressions convey! God himself, the joy and delight of the holy, is a "consuming fire" to the wicked, and his wrath must burn against them for ever, with increasing strength, if they finally reject his mercy.

The arrow was sometimes used to represent the terror of the wrath of God. "I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them." Deut. 32: 23. The arrow was one of the most important weapons of ancient warfare; and it was often a terrible one, especially when dipped in poison, or made to carry fire. But if the arrows which man hurls against his enemy are such dangerous things, what must be the arrows of the Almighty's wrath? Besides, it says, "I will *spend* mine arrows upon them." The soldier always carried a quiver filled with these weapons, that he might be well supplied

in the battle; and when he had spent or exhausted all these, we may suppose he had wounded or slain not a few of his enemies. But who can number the arrows of the Almighty? None, for his quiver is inexhaustible, and his "arrows go forth as the lightning." When *his* anger is aroused, he will never want means and opportunities to rebuke and punish the guilty. At any moment, he can compel the sinner to cry out with pain, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." Job 6: 4.

When God deals with the sinner in his wrath, he is sometimes said to take away his light. This is also a strong figurative expression; and if we look at it closely, we shall see that it is full of meaning. "How oft," said Job, "is the candle of the wicked put out?" Job 21: 17. "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine." Job 18: 5. "They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noonday as in the night." Job 5: 14.

"The candle of the wicked shall be put out." Prov. 24: 20. If any of my readers have ever endeavored to conceive what this world would be, were the sun and moon extinguished, and the stars blotted out, and darkness permitted to reign over the earth, then they can see the force of these figurative expressions. The sinner, under the wrath of God, is left in a perpetual moral night. The bright beams of the Sun of righteousness are withdrawn from his path, and even the taper light or "candle" in his own bosom is extinguished. The effects of this upon his mind and heart are somewhat analogous to what would be experienced in the natural world, were darkness to cover the earth.

By another figurative expression, the wicked are said to *drink* of the wrath of God. "He shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." Job 21: 20. "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." Ps. 75: 8. "The same

shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." Rev. 14: 10. Thus the sinner is compelled to swallow the dreadful draught and the bitter dregs of the cup of indignation, which God has prepared for those who will not serve him. As he "drinketh iniquity like water" when left to himself, so God shall at last compel him to drain the cup of his wrath.

Such are some of the representations of the anger of God, with which the Bible abounds. To illustrate these, many examples are given on the sacred page. We there read of the angels who "kept not their first estate," and against whom the wrath of God has never ceased to burn; of the antediluvians, who perished in their sins; of the guilty cities of the plain, upon which the fiery judgments of God descended; of oppressive Egypt, against whom the wrath of the Lord was revealed in dreadful plagues; of the numerous trials with which the same righteous hand visited backsliding Israel; and of the overwhelming desolation which he poured

out upon the nations of antiquity who dishonored him and oppressed his people. Doubtless my readers are familiar with these, and I need, therefore, only allude to them here. The history of man, in every age, teaches us that solemn truth, "God distributeth sorrows in his anger." Job 21: 17. Even in uninspired history, the Christian can discern the hand of God pouring out his wrath upon guilty nations, and overwhelming them with desolation and ruin. Neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Christian nor pagan, can escape it, but by obedience to God and his laws. It descends alike upon the great and the small, the rich and the poor. "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath." Zeph. 1: 18. "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." Hos. 8: 7. Men have sometimes endeavored to frustrate the purposes of God, and avert the strokes of his justice; but their mightiest efforts have been but the casting of a pebble before his chariot wheels. Their shafts fall as harmless as the arrows which the African

savage shoots at the lightning to arrest its terrible flashes. Neither can the sinner stand before the anger of God, and brave its fury, as he may the wrath of a fellow-man. How shall man contend with God? Though a nation rise up against him, one breath can overthrow them in destruction. Yea, though a world revolt, and join in perfect union to oppose his will, he need but open the windows of heaven to overwhelm them in a deluge. "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?" Na. 1: 6. "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord hath spoken it, and will do it." Eze. 22: 14.

Youthful reader! is God angry with you? If you are impenitent, you have every reason to suppose that he is, though, in his mercy, he may delay awhile any visible manifestation of his displeasure. "He that believeth not is condemned already." John 3: 18. "THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM." John 8: 36. Think of this a moment. If you are a condemned sinner, under sentence of

eternal death, and yet refusing pardon, can God be otherwise than angry with you? Think what it is to be under the wrath of the Almighty. If it is so melancholy a thing to lose his approbation, how dreadful must it be to add to this the weight of his righteous displeasure! O, beware how you trifle with such a fearful curse. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." Job 36: 18. Weigh well the matter, before you decide to go on in so dangerous a path. "Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" Job 9: 4. Then why will you try the vain experiment?

The Bible teaches us that the sinner may reach a point, even in this life, when he will be beyond the reach of mercy, and nothing but wrath be reserved for him, in this world or the world to come. "Therefore," says the Lord, "will I also deal in fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Eze. 8: 18. Their prayers will then find no gracious ear

to listen to them. Even the intercessions of those who have power with God can do them no good. God's ancient people reached a point in sin, when he declared, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people." Jer. 15: 1. Every sinner may, if he choose, reach this same point. When he has done this, there will be no escape from the wrath of God. It will pursue him to the grave,—it will terrify him in his passage through the valley of the shadow of death,—it will fasten upon him, never more to be removed, in the world of wo. God has declared this. "A fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell." Deut. 32: 22.

Some may think that this view contradicts the doctrine of the love and mercy of God. It does not. The divine wrath is nothing more nor less than supreme love and benevolence punishing guilt, and executing justice. This is the doctrine of the Bible; and they who invest the Deity with a character differing from this, misrepresent and dishonor him. God is merciful, but he is not *all* mercy; he

is just and holy. He has mercy for the penitent, and wrath for the incorrigible. It is contrary even to our views of justice, to show mercy to a criminal who remains stubborn and hardened, and exhibits no signs of sorrow for his crimes, but rather a disposition to repeat them; and shall God bestow forgiveness on such? His mercy is ever ready for the penitent. When he was about to overwhelm Nineveh with ruin, he suffered his will to be changed, and laid by all his wrath against that city, because the people repented. And is his mercy less now than it was then? Certainly not. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." Is. 59: 1. He is still our Father, though we have turned against him; and the first token of penitence he beholds in the wayward prodigal moves his compassion, and his arms are extended to welcome the lost one home. O, that we were as anxious to avoid his anger as he is to have us, and as ready to accept his mercy as he is to bestow it!

CHAPTER III.

SIN EXPOSES US TO SATAN'S INFLUENCE.

History of Satan—His character—He is the sinner's master—No serving two masters—The sinner peculiarly exposed to his influence—Partnership with Satan—Anecdote of George White—Twelve scriptural names and titles of Satan—His character summed up—His achievements—The fall—The crucifixion—Havoc among some of the early professed Christians—Satan's power over true Christians greatly restricted—God on their side—But one step from the narrow way to Satan's grounds—His treatment of his captives—His power great, though not irresistible—Conclusion.

We come now to another of the appalling consequences of our sin, and one which grows out of the two we have just considered. There is in this world a fallen spirit, called Satan, whom God permits, for a season, to have great power over the children of men. He was once an angel of light; but having rebelled against God, he was cast out,—

"Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down

To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms."

Still, he retains much of the exalted intellect and mighty power which he possessed when holy, though both are now entirely perverted to the basest and most malignant ends. He arrays himself against God, in this world, has established a kingdom of his own, and devotes all his energies and wisdom to rob the Almighty of his rightful authority, and secure to himself the allegiance of the earth. And this, reader, is the master whom every one must serve, who casts off the authority of God. Every human being, the Bible informs us, must be united either to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan. There is not a soul on earth who is not in the service of one of these powers. Nor, it should be added, is there one who ever has served them both, at the same time, or in alternate succession. The soldier who should engage his services to two contending generals, would lose his life, were his conduct known to either party. When General Arnold made propos-

als to the British commander to betray an American fortress into his hands, he became a traitor, and was disowned by his countrymen. His name was stamped with infamy, even in the estimation of those whose favor he hoped to secure by this base act. And why? Simply because the world despise a man who would serve two masters, and betray one for the benefit of the other. Yet this is the way in which some men endeavor to serve God and Satan. But, fortunately, they cannot conceal their base hypocrisy from the eyes of the Almighty. He detects their fraud, and, in his view, all such are as truly the children of the devil as those who ridicule religion, or deny the existence of a Supreme Being.

It is evident, therefore, that the sinner is naturally the servant of Satan. God has withdrawn his approbation from him, and his wrath has begun to kindle against him. And now, still further to punish his sin, God delivers him over to the great adversary of souls, and permits him to be peculiarly exposed to his wicked influences. If snares are spread

for the foolish, he is one of the first to fall into them. If tempting baits are held out to allure the simple, he is ever ready to grasp them, and swallow the fatal hook. If the adversary invents new and great temptations, he is quickly led into them, to the destruction or sad injury of his soul. "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." Eccl. 9: 12. Satan becomes the sinner's teacher and accomplice in wickedness. They both work together, and pursue the same end; and this some are willing to acknowledge. It is related of George White, a notorious thief, that when arraigned for horse-stealing, it was supposed he was connected with an extensive gang, who were laying contributions upon all the stables round about. Many inducements were held out to White to reveal the names of his associates, but in vain. An assurance from the Court was at last obtained that he should be discharged, upon his taking oath to reveal all he then knew of his accomplices.

The jury were accordingly suffered to bring in a verdict of "not guilty," when he was called upon for the promised revelations. "I shall be faithful to my word," said he; "understand, then, that *the devil* is the only accomplice I ever had; and we have been a great while in partnership." A frank confession; and it may afford a subject of profitable reflection to the reader.

This Satanic influence over the sinner increases as he goes on in sin, and God's care for him diminishes. The chains by which he is led are strengthened, and the fetters made tighter. Happy for him if he is not speedily led captive to the world of wo!

If we would fully understand what a calamity it is to be thus given up to the influence of the evil one, we must have some definite idea of his malignant character. That the reader may obtain this, I have collected from the Bible a number of his names and titles, which convey much instruction in a few words.

1. *Satan.* This is a Hebrew word, signifying *enemy;* so that the proper name of this

being exactly expresses his character. He is the great enemy of God and man.

2. *Devil.* This name comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, which means, one who accuses or calumniates. John, in his vision, heard a loud voice, saying, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Rev. 12: 10. This passage refers to Satan, the great accuser.

3. *Beelzebub.* This was originally the name of a famous heathen god, who is supposed to have been one of the chief divinities of some of the ancient nations. As the Jews considered all heathen gods devils, this name was appropriately applied to Satan, the chief or prince of devils.

4. *Belial.* This is a Hebrew word, meaning literally, "a wicked, headstrong man;" and in the Old Testament, lewd, profligate and vile persons are called "sons of Belial." When applied to Satan, it means the prince of licentiousness and corruption.

5. *Abaddon and Apollyon.* The first of these names is a Hebrew word, and the last a Greek one, both of which mean, "the destroyer." This title is eminently appropriate to Satan, who, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

6. *The Dragon, and the Serpent.* Satan is spoken of in John's Revelation as the great dragon and the old serpent. The former name is borrowed from a formidable animal, mentioned several times in the Old Testament; and the latter is doubtless an allusion to the serpent who beguiled Eve.

7. *Angel of the bottomless pit.* In this title, reference is made to Satan as the king of hell.

8. *The Enemy, and the Adversary.* These names are descriptive of his bitter hostility to God and man.

9. *The Prince of devils.* Satan is called the prince of devils, and "the prince of the power of the air," in allusion to his power over other fallen spirits, associated with him.

10. *The Prince and God of this world.* These titles convey to our minds some idea

of the power which Satan is permitted to wield on earth. He is not only the angel of the abyss, but he is the prince of this world, and the god of this world.

11. *The Tempter.* He is thus called, in allusion to the temptations which he is always spreading in the way of men.

12. *The Wicked One.* This epithet is several times applied to Satan in the New Testament.

Such are the principal names and titles by which Satan is known in the Bible;* and with what a hideous character do they invest him! We are told that he was a sinner from the beginning; and not only this, but a liar, a deceiver and a murderer. He is the great parent of all that is evil,—the patron of every abomination and vice,—the leader in all sin and rebellion. We see, then, why it is that "he that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning." 1 John

* It is not uncommon to hear the name "Lucifer" applied to Satan, and many suppose it is so used in the Bible. This is a mistake. The word occurs but once in the Scriptures (Is. 14: 12), and then it evidently refers to the king of Babylon, and indicates his glory as the chief of princes.

3: 8. And we see why Jesus, in rebuking some unbelieving Jews, told them that their father was the devil. John 8: 44. Those who are not the children of God are the children of Satan.

We may still enlarge our knowledge of Satan's character, by glancing at a few facts in history, which illustrate this subject.

The fall of man was the grand achievement of Satan in this world. He instigated and beguiled Eve to break the command of God, and thus was the prime mover in that rebellion. What dark malignity must reign in a heart that would be guilty of such an act, and bring sorrow, despair and death into the happy paradise of earth! What foul malice, what fiendish hatred, what cold-blooded malevolence must have prompted the murderous deed! And precisely such, at the present time, is the character of the wily serpent, unless, indeed, he has advanced in depravity during the past six thousand years, which is not improbable.

The crucifixion of our Saviour was another event in which Satan was deeply engaged.

He entered into the heart of Judas Iscariot, and moved him to betray his Lord. And why? what evil had he done? Ah, it was because he had done *no* evil, that Satan thus raged against him. But his wrath, in this instance, was in vain, and only served to accomplish God's designs of mercy.

Soon after this, we find him among the professed followers of Christ, endeavoring to seduce them from their Master. Sometimes he was successful. Paul, even in his day, was compelled to own that "some are already turned aside after Satan." 1 Tim. 5: 15. He tells us of two such, whom he had "delivered unto Satan;" their names, as you will recollect, were Hymeneus and Alexander. There were two other professed disciples mentioned in the fifth chapter of Acts, whom the great adversary instigated to lie to the Holy Ghost. I need not tell you of the speedy judgment which overtook them. I suppose there were others, in those times, whom Satan led captive; for the great apostle seems to have foreseen this, when he wrote to Timothy, "Some shall depart from the faith, giving

heed to seducing spirits, and the doctrines of devils." 1 Tim. 4: 1. Nor has Satan been idle since that time. The pages of history, as well as the scenes now enacting before our eyes, are so many witnesses to the continued zeal and malice of the adversary. As in old times, so now, like a roaring lion, he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

It must not be supposed, however, that in the instances just mentioned, Satan seduced *true Christians* from Christ, and ruined their souls. This he cannot do. When any were "delivered unto Satan," they were excluded from the church, as unbelievers; for all such gave evidence that they had not experienced a change of heart. Still Satan has power over the Christian to tempt him to sin, though not to lead him to final ruin. He once moved David to number the people, contrary to the will of God. He was the means of bringing many trials and afflictions upon Job. He desired to have Peter, that he might "sift him as wheat." He even beset our Saviour, and spread before him his most alluring temptations, though utterly in vain.

The righteous, though often tempted by him, are never fatally seduced. When they are assaulted by him, they have an armor to protect them, as well as powerful weapons to vex the adversary. God is on their side, and who can prevail against them? It is true an arrow from Satan's bow may occasionally pierce their souls; but the Great Physician is ever ready to apply a speedy remedy. Satan, with all his "legion," can never destroy the souls of God's children. But over the children of darkness he holds a fearful power. He knows how to ensnare, and tempt, and allure, and ruin them; and as they have no kind Father above to protect and deliver them, their danger is indeed great.

Remember, then, youthful reader, that when you forsake the way of God, you must of necessity wander into Satan's grounds. The straight and narrow path is, in fact, laid out through his usurped territory; for he is "the god of this world." The least deviation from this path must, therefore, expose the pilgrim to great danger; and the farther he wanders, the greater does this danger become.

God will defend you while you travel over his highway; but you ought to expect no protection from him if you forsake it. On every side, snares are spread for you, and hellish plots are laid for your destruction. Like Bunyan's pilgrims, when they wandered on the grounds of Giant Despair, you may be taken captive, and led to the dungeon, if you linger on Satan's territory. The treatment which such receive, often reminds me of the unhappy fate of Zedekiah, when he was conquered by the king of Babylon. His eyes, after being compelled to witness a dreadful spectacle,—the murder of his own children,—were put out, and then he was led into captivity, bound in chains. So Satan, when he would lead a soul captive, darkens or extinguishes its vision, and leads it to death in chains and fetters. He is a "strong man armed," and his power is terrible,*

* In speaking of Satan's power over men, in this chapter, the reader must not understand me as saying that it is any thing like an omnipotent or irresistible influence, beyond the control of the sinner. This is a Romish dogma, and is not taught in the Word of God. The sacred writers do not recommend exorcisms, and chrisms, and holy water, and

though often so artfully concealed, that his most faithful servants cannot be persuaded, even by the word of God, that such a being has an existence.

We have thus seen that Satan is an unwearied, vigilant and malignant foe, an artful deceiver, and a cruel master. His name is "enemy." And now, shall any thing more be said to the impenitent, to persuade them to escape from his yoke before God has delivered them over to him for ever? What more *can* be said?

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incantations, to protect us from Satan and his angels; but they simply say, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4: 7. "Satan," says Prof. Stuart, "derives his success from our *voluntary* subjection and yielding to him. He has no power to harm us, when we resist him, no more than he had to harm the Saviour, when he was tempted, but still without any sin."

CHAPTER IV.

SIN AWAKENS REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE.

Scene in a palace—The reader introduced to Caligula—Object of the allusion—Definition of conscience—Its object—Familiar illustrations—All know what it is from experience—Conscience may be silenced for a season, but not for ever—The picture-gallery—The resurrection of conscience—The dead tree and the dead sinner—The sons of Jacob—The adulteress and her accusers—A story from Plutarch—The Hindoo who murdered his son—The stolen watch—Conscience may *torture* as well as reprove—Remorse—The royal murderer—Valuable testimony from Rev. Robert Hall—The duellist—Reflections.

BEHOLD a palace, radiant with purple and gold, and adorned with the richest tributes of art and skill. Beauty beams upon you in a thousand forms as you enter, till you are bewildered and lost amid the display of sumptuous royalty. "Who dwells here?" are the first words that break from your lips. Who? I will tell you. There dwells one here whose life is a continued scene of debauchery and crime; whose laughter and

smiles can scarcely conceal the foul treachery of his heart; who wanders nearly all night long through his palace, unable to rest, now throwing himself upon a couch, and now traversing the long corridors, anxiously looking for the earliest dawn; whose scanty hours of sleep are disturbed by hideous and tumultuous dreams, robbing him of repose, and seeming to shadow forth something more dark and terrible than words can describe. Wretched man! Tormented by day and haunted by night, madly plunging deeper each hour into vice and crime, and yet all the while writhing under the lash of conscience,—hated and feared by all, and loving none,—what a being is this!

Such, reader, was a famous tyrant of old; and I allude to him here, as an illustration of the meaning of the title at the head of this chapter.

But what is conscience? and what is it to awaken remorse in the soul? Conscience is defined as "the sense of right and wrong." It is that power or faculty within us which takes cognizance of every thing we do, or

say, or think, and either commends or reproves, as the action is good or bad. It has been compared to a silent monitor, watching every action, thought and word, and admonishing us when in danger; and to a secret judge, examining our conduct, and passing sentence upon us. It is a faculty upon which we should set a high value. What would man be without it? It has survived the ruins of the fall, and, if properly treated, is one of our greatest safeguards against sin. God placed it in our bosoms for this purpose, and it can never be annihilated, though its voice may for a time be silenced.

In youth, while it is tender, conscience speaks and admonishes us, even when we only contemplate mischief, and frequently compels us to break up our plans. I suppose this to be the principal object for which it was given us. But we are now to look upon it as inflicting pain upon the transgressor; for this, also, is a part of its work.

The punishment of sin begins with the first transgression; and conscience is the scourge which God uses to accomplish this purpose.

When the well-trained child, who is old enough to understand the wishes of his mother, for the first time disregards them, how quickly does he feel the sting of conscience! He thinks of that mother's love and kindness towards him, and his little heart is filled with grief, that he has caused her pain. The moral and amiable young man who, having left his father's roof, has just taken the first step in disobedience, by joining in a party of pleasure on the Sabbath, or visiting the theatre, or partaking of the intoxicating cup, will hear a sad, reproachful voice, when he returns to his pillow at night, which perchance will drive sleep from his eyelids for many a weary hour. This is his first step into the forbidden path of vice, but his punishment begins as soon as the sin is committed. Guilt has set him at variance with himself, and armed his conscience against him.

During the interval between the transgression of Adam and Eve, and the appearance of God to them, though nothing is said of it in the Bible, they doubtless suffered from this same cause. It is difficult to believe

that their consciences slept quietly at such a moment as that. Whatever contracts guilt must, of necessity, produce either obduracy of heart, or remorse of conscience; and in the earlier stages of sin, the latter effect generally predominates. And who of us has not felt this feeling? Who has a conscience that has not often reproved him, and perhaps stung him with remorse, when an important step in sin has been taken?

As I have before intimated, these reproofs of conscience may be silenced by resisting its admonitions, and repeatedly doing the things which it condemns. This is called *searing* the conscience, and will be spoken upon more fully in another chapter. This process is going on in the conscience of every impenitent sinner, young and old. But there is one thing which should be remembered by all, though I fear it is forgotten by most. Conscience, when it seems to have retired from its seat, and given the reins to the sinner, is, in fact, silently marking down every sin he commits, and will one day bring them all to light, and, if they are not repented of,

will rebuke him with terrible power. It treasures up even the smallest offences, and arranges them in its vast "picture-gallery;" and there he must meet them, at a future day. O, it will be a fearful meeting, too. How will he start when sins stand out and frown upon him which he had forgotten long ago, and had vainly supposed were buried in oblivion! "When conscience takes a man in hand, and leads him up and down through the gallery of his own remembered sins, stops at this picture and that, and points out shades and colorings that he never saw before, and sometimes darkens the room, and takes down a vivid transparency of guilt, and holds it before the fire to his vision, so that his past life seems to burn before him, it does not take long in such employment to make the room seem walled with retributive flames, and peopled with condemning fiends."* Sometimes men have passed through a long life of prosperous guilt, and seemed almost to have lost their consciences, when unexpectedly it awoke, and thundered its reproofs

* Dr. Cheever's Lectures on Pilgrim's Progress.

with such power as to drive them either to insanity, or to relief in Christ.

It is surprising how little it takes, in some cases, to arouse a conscience that has slumbered for years. One Sabbath morning, a man who was bitterly opposed to religion, and had long been the trial of his pious wife, took his axe upon his shoulder, and went to his wood-lot to fell trees. He soon saw one dead and dry, with its leafless branches extending into the air, and he said to himself, "That tree I will cut down; it is dead and dry, fit only to burn." At that moment the thought rushed into his mind, "Am not I a dead tree, too, fit only to burn?" It was the suggestion of his conscience, and perhaps of the Spirit of God, and in vain he tried to banish the thought. He struck a few blows with his axe, but the question still rose in his mind, "Am not I a dead tree, fit only to burn? Will not God say concerning me, Cut him down, for he cumbereth the ground?" Again and again he tried to drive away the harrowing thought; but it was a barbed arrow in his heart, and he could not tear it

out. He plied his axe with increasing vigor, but every blow seemed to deepen the conviction of his own spiritual deadness. At last he could endure it no longer. He shouldered his axe, returned home to his chamber, fell on his knees before God, and cried for mercy; and he found that peace which the penitent never seek in vain. This was the triumph of conscience.

The Bible furnishes us with several striking instances of the power of a reproving conscience. The sons of Jacob, twenty years after they had sold their brother into slavery, and reported him as dead to their father, felt the just reproofs of this faithful monitor, when they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Gen. 42: 21. A still more remarkable instance is recorded in the life of our Saviour. The Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery—a crime punishable by stoning to death. But when Christ said to them,

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PACIFIC SCHOOL

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," their own consciences began to condemn them, and they left his presence, one by one, till the woman alone was left with him. John 8: 3–9.

Plutarch, an ancient heathen historian, relates the story of one by the name of Bessus, which aptly illustrates this subject. He had murdered his father, and for years escaped detection. Being one day present with some friends at a feast, he suddenly lifted his spear, and struck down a nest of young swallows, which he immediately killed. When asked what reason he could possibly have for so barbarous an act, he replied, "Do you not hear how they falsely accuse me, and cry out that I murdered my father?" The suspicions which this answer excited were fully confirmed upon investigation; and the unnatural son was ordered to execution, having been brought to justice by means of his own conscience.

I recently met in a newspaper with another illustration of this kind, which lately occurred in India. A native was brought before a

judge, charged upon his own confession with murdering his child. When the question was put, "Did you kill your son?" he replied, "Yes, I killed him." When asked for what fault he did this, he replied, "He never committed any crime; we were both starving; I had nothing to give him to eat; he cried, and looked in my face; he was weak, and lay down on the ground. He lay down in the jungle, and could not rise again; night was coming on, and I heard the tiger roaring, and I thought he would seize you, my poor boy, if I left you. And so I killed you! I then buried him in a ravine, lest the wild beasts should devour him. I went away slowly, for I was weak and ill. And when I got further into the forest, I thought I heard him call. And then I fainted away. But he calls me now every day. In the morning, and noon, and night I hear him call, 'Father, O father!' So I cannot eat, I cannot work, I cannot laugh, I can live no more! So hang me, sir, kill me quick, and this wretchedness is over." This is a remarkable illustration of the power of conscience, even over

a benighted pagan; but he made a great mistake in supposing that death would silence its reproachful voice.

In another newspaper I recently met with the following paragraph: "A gentleman who resides at —— street, yesterday received a watch, of which he was formerly owner, but which was stolen from him fourteen years ago, when he was a boy at school. With the watch he received a note, calling to his recollection the time and manner of the theft, which was effected by one of his schoolmates. The writer says that the watch had become a source of great affliction to his guilty conscience, so much so that he had resolved to return it without delay." Cases of this kind, in which conscience has compelled the sinner to make amends for injuries committed long since, have been of frequent occurrence, of late.

But these illustrations do not give us a very correct idea of what conscience *can* do, and often has done, when the sinner has long closed his ear to its voice, and treated its friendly admonitions with contempt. When

aroused under such circumstances, it becomes bold as a lion, and terrible as a scourge of scorpions. Then it is that dread remorse, vulture-like, broods over the bleeding spirit, and preys upon the last remnant of the sinner's hopes.

"Conscience, the torturer of the soul, unseen,
Does fiercely brandish a sharp scourge within.
Severe decrees may keep our tongues in awe,
But to our thoughts what edict can give law?
Even you yourself to your own breast shall tell
Your crimes, and your own conscience be your hell."

Remorse! it is the greatest agony that a man can endure. It is as though a host of accusers surrounded him, each with a thousand tongues, reproaching and upbraiding him. Yet he is his own accuser and his own tormentor. Thus was it with Charles IX, of France, who ordered the massacre of Bartholomew, and assisted in that bloody tragedy. Ever after that event, he had a fierceness in his looks, and a color in his face, which he never had before. His conscience troubled him so that he could sleep but little, and never sound, but frequently woke up in

great distress, requiring soft music to compose him. After having undergone the most intense suffering of body and mind, he at length died of a lingering disorder,—leaving on the page of history, in the record of his life, a most melancholy example of the power of a remorseful conscience.

The Rev. Robert Hall, father of the celebrated clergyman of the same name, passed seven years of his early life in a state of darkness, distress and despondency, occasioned by a conscience burdened with sin. At times his mind was filled with despair, and borne down by an overwhelming sense of guilt, and dreadful apprehensions of eternal death, which his Arminian pastor was wholly unable to remove. While in this state, he met with several distressing accidents; at one time he had an arm and three of his ribs broken; and before these got well, he was thrown from his horse, by which his arm was again broken, his other arm and collar-bone fractured, and his shoulder disjointed. Yet, severe as was the pain caused by these multiplied calamities, he often declared, that all

the pain he endured from these broken bones did not equal the anguish of his mind. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Pr.18: 14.

Before leaving this subject, I will give the reader one more illustration of the power of a remorseful conscience. Not many years ago, a duel was fought near one of our principal cities, between two individuals who were related to each other, and had once been friends. Their muskets were loaded with buckshot and slugs, and, after withdrawing ten paces apart, they fired. The effect was fatal to the one who sent the challenge, and he fell dead upon the spot. The other escaped unhurt. . . A few years have passed away, and where now is the "honorable" and fashionable murderer? He is intelligent, educated and wealthy, and why should he not be prosperous and happy? He might have been, but, like the first murderer, he bears a mark of infamy and guilt upon him, which no earthly power may remove. Visit his bedside, as he retires at night. After tossing for hours upon his restless pillow, and

again and again uttering a deep, half-stifled groan, that reveals the inward pangs of his soul, he sinks into sleep. And now, rolling from side to side, the name of his murdered victim falls repeatedly from his lips, accompanied with broken words and exclamations that discover the keen remorse preying upon his conscience. Suddenly he starts up in the bed, terrified with the thought that the avenger of blood is pursuing him; and now he hides himself beneath the covering, as if to escape the withering frown of an offended God. And thus does conscience scourge him continually, leaving him no rest by day or by night. He is not a maniac, nor is his intellect disordered; but he is given up to the torments of an evil conscience. And he who once would show himself a man of courage and honor, by braving death, is now compelled to confess that he dare not sleep alone!

Such, reader, is *one* of the punishments of sin in this life. Does it seem to you a trifling thing? Do you think you shall have no fear of the terrors of an evil conscience, if you

can but obtain wealth, or honor, or the means of pleasure? Ah, if you judge thus, you know little of the terrible fire which such a conscience may kindle in your breast. If *bodily* pain is to be dreaded, how much more is that of which I have here spoken! I know not that anguish of body ever drove one poor mortal to the suicide's grave; but anguish of mind,—remorse of conscience,—has driven thousands thither. These are the pangs of the second death. Wo to the sinner, when they get hold of his soul! No earthly physician, no worldly good, can console him. He is, in one sense, already in the world of the lost.

"Within him hell
He brings, and round about him; nor from hell
One step no more than from himself can fly,
By change of place."

See to it, reader, that this misery is not mingled in your cup. You can escape it only by obeying and cherishing conscience, and renouncing sin.

CHAPTER V.

SIN AWAKENS FEAR OF DETECTION AND PUNISHMENT.

Fear the offspring of disobedience—Contrast between angels and men—Remark of a criminal—The sinner afraid of God's eye—The righteous not—Illustrations—An ancient threatening—Fear sometimes beneficial—An instance—Another aspect of fear—A source of misery—The offender betrayed by it—Above law, but not above fear—Tiberius—Antiochus Epiphanes—Richard III—Fear common to all—Hobbes, the skeptic—Testimony of Bunyan—A disastrous effect.

FEAR, as well as care, solicitude, anxiety, and all similar unpleasant emotions, is to be set down on the long catalogue of the evils of sin. It is the unhappy offspring of disobedience to God, and is entirely unknown where sin does not exist. When it is said that the heavenly beings fear their Maker, the word implies a holy, reverential awe, quite different from the emotion of a sinner's heart. Angels do not fear to meet the eye of God, nor tremble and quake at his pres-

ence, as Israel did when he appeared to them on Mount Sinai. They have never sinned, and why should they be fearful? They rejoice in the perfections of the Almighty, and adore his justice and his truth. But this the sinner cannot do. The holiness of God, as it pours down upon *his* mind, is as the spark that lights the tinder,—the flame that kindles the everlasting burnings. He dreads and quails before the very attributes in which angels find their greatest joy.

A criminal once wept while his trial was in progress, and some one attempted to comfort him by assuring him that justice would be done. "Alas!" said the unhappy man, "that is what I am afraid of." So is it with every sinner; he fears justice, and he fears holiness. He is, therefore, afraid even to have God look upon him. If he realized that an omnipotent eye beheld every action of his life, and read every thought of his heart, his pleasure would be dashed in a moment. This is guilt;—it shuns the eye of God. How different is it with a converted soul! David *rejoiced* that God knew him so

perfectly; and he even prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts." Ps. 139: 23. The testimony of the late Dr. Harris, of New Hampshire, was similar to this. "I have preached," said he, when near the close of life, "I have preached about God, I have read about God, and I have thought about God; and now I want to see him, face to face, eye to eye,—not through a glass, darkly. *I am not afraid of God.* I don't wish to hide myself from him. I wish to SEE him." This is the language of piety and innocence.

God has wisely and justly decreed that sinners *shall fear*, when they go astray. Hear what he said, respecting his ancient people: "I will send a faintness into their hearts, in the land of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth." Lev. 26: 36. Similar threatenings are found in other parts of the Scriptures, plainly teaching us that fear, or the anticipation and dread of

evil to come, is an important part of the sinner's punishment in this world.

But it should not be forgotten that one of the designs of fear is to restrain and reform the transgressor. Look at an illustration. Henry has been forbidden to go on the ice to-day, because his parents think it unsafe; but a favorable opportunity offers, and, though accustomed to obey, the temptation to sin overcomes him, and he joins the skating party. He does not go far before he has some apprehensions that all is not safe; and now he thinks of his mother's warning, and the command of his father. He grows more and more uneasy, and he imagines the danger greater, on account of his disobedience. At length his fears get such power over him that, excusing himself the best way he can, he turns about, and retraces his steps. And now look upon him, quickening his pace as he nears the shore. He knows he has done wrong, and fears some punishment will overtake him for it; and so deep an impression has this thought made upon his mind, that he almost fancies the ice bends and cracks

beneath him at each step. Now, when Henry reaches the shore, his salutary fears (and you must not think them mere cowardice, for he is not a coward) will have produced a good result upon him. He has felt their restraining influence, and to-morrow will be less likely to disobey his parents than he was yesterday. This is one of the good effects of fear. Paul made use of it, when he preached the gospel; for he says, "Knowing, therefore, the *terror of the Lord*, we persuade men." 2 Cor. 5: 11 But we are now to look at fear as one of the evil consequences of sin, and not as a means of reforming the sinner.

Fear is the opposite of hope, and is always an unhappy state of mind. It shuts peace out of the soul, and introduces into it moroseness and remorse. Even when a guilty person has no fear of punishment, but simply dreads to have his conduct known, this feeling may destroy his peace. But when detection becomes probable, and to this is added a distressing fear of punishment, nothing more is wanting to make him miserable. To

enforce and illustrate what I have said, I will now endeavor to show the reader the operation of fear upon men under several different circumstances.

First, then, let us look at one who has committed a crime against the laws of the land. Perhaps the offender is so sunk in vice, that conscience does not utter one word of rebuke. He cares not for what he has done, nor laments the consequences of his guilt. But still he *fears*. He is suspicious of every one he meets by day, and is frequently alarmed in his sleep by the thought that he is discovered. "A dreadful sound is in his ears." Job 15: 21. Thus many a guilty criminal has betrayed himself, and suffered the punishment which, but for his fears, he might have escaped. Under the influence of the same feeling, the highwayman, fleeing for his life, "sees in each *bush* an officer," and fancies every moment that he will fall into the hands of justice; reminding one of that saying of Solomon, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." Prov. 28: 1. Now these men, though their coffers

are well filled with ill-gotten gold, and every thing around them is pleasant, and inviting, and lovely, know nothing of the enjoyment and peace of the just and upright. How can they, when they are constantly haunted with fears that they may soon find themselves within the dark walls of a prison, stripped of all they now call their own? There can be no peace or enjoyment of mind to such.

But suppose these men were permitted to indulge in all the vices and crimes they chose, without being interfered with at all by human law. Fines, imprisonment and death are not permitted to disturb their peace, but every restraint is removed, and nothing is allowed to molest them in the gratification of their passions. What have they to fear now? Some might say, nothing; but there is a doubt as to this. Let us look at one or two instances of this kind, recorded in history.

Tiberius, the gloomy, treacherous and cruel tyrant of Rome, imagined himself beyond the control of every law. He sported like a savage with the lives of his people, and plunged into the most revolting vices. Yet

this tyrant, while thus acting, in all the plenitude of his power, was tormented night and day with most dreadful apprehensions. And at length he wrote a letter to the Senate, in which he disclosed the inward wound of his soul, and expressed such words of despair, as might have excited the pity even of those who lived in constant fear of his tyranny. These mental agonies, this distressing fear of evil to come, were the consequences of his crimes, as himself confessed.

Antiochus Epiphanes was another ancient tyrant, who is celebrated in history for his cruelty and impiety. He ridiculed all religions, and robbed the temple of the Jews, as well as of the Greeks. He conquered Jerusalem about one hundred and seventy years before our Saviour's birth, and, after inflicting upon the citizens every calamity that furious malice could invent, and causing their streets to flow with blood, he attempted to make them become pagans. A short time before he died, while he was suffering incredible pains of body, his conscience awoke, and brought with it many terrible fears and appre-

hensions. In his delirium, he imagined that spectres stood continually before him, and reproached him for his crimes; and thus he died, tormented with imaginary fears. Such examples confirm the remark of Flavel, that "a guilty conscience is more terrified by imaginary dangers, than a pure conscience is by real ones."

History furnishes us with numerous other instances of the power of fear, even in those who are beyond the reach of human law and justice; but I will relate only one more. King Richard III, after he had murdered his innocent nephews, was so troubled with fear that he always acted as if some great danger were in his way. His eyes were ever wandering about on every side, and he frequently laid his hand upon his dagger, with a furious look, that seemed to intimate that he was about to fall upon some one. He wore a suit of mail, to protect his life. Distressed as he was by day, he suffered even more at night; for, alarmed by terrifying dreams, he would spring from his bed, and run about his chamber like a madman.

Thus does fear follow the commission of crime, in this world. Every one who has transgressed just human laws, knows this to be true. And it is the same with every being who transgresses the laws of God. Even the most abandoned are, in some part of their life, troubled with these fears. The scoffing infidel, the designing hypocrite, and every impenitent sinner, knows what they are. That notorious skeptic, Mr. Hobbes, who poisoned so many minds with his wicked principles, was accustomed, in a humor of bravado, to speak strange and blasphemous things of God; and those who heard him, doubtless, thought him a bold champion of atheism. But it was not so. Some, who narrowly watched him, declared that in his study, in the dark, and in his retired thoughts, he trembled before God. He was unable to bear the dismal reflections of his dark and benighted mind. He could not endure to be left alone in the house, or to sleep in the dark; and if his candle went out in the night, he awoke in terror. He could not bear that death should be mentioned to him, even in

his old age; and when the dreaded hour at length arrived, he was filled with terrible apprehensions of the future. Was not this a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation?"

We have another illustration in the life of John Bunyan, before his conversion. While he was the ringleader among the profane and wicked, he had not a few terrifying thoughts, as well as many stings of conscience. After days spent in sin, his dreams were sometimes peculiarly frightful. A distressing fear of retribution intruded into his gayest hours; and thus, in his experience, were frequently verified the words of another, "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me." Ps. 55: 5.

After the sinner has followed a long course of sins, and hardened his heart in unbelief, we all know how difficult it is for him to repent. Even if his soul is awakened, and sees its dreadful danger, there is yet a secret power that holds him back,—a power which, too often, is never overcome. And what is this power? It is like a rope, composed of

several fibres or strands, united and twisted together; and one of these strands is the very thing of which I am speaking. So we see another of the evil consequences of fear. While in the situation described, the sinner fears an injured God, and dare not hope for pardon; yes, he even fears the Saviour of sinners, and cannot be persuaded to look upon him as his friend. He imagines that there is no salvation for him, no refuge to hide his defenceless head from the storm. Sin has done its work, and fear, like an evil spirit, broods over his soul, not permitting him to cherish one thought of repentance, or one hope of recovery. Then it is he imagines that God has verified that awful threatening, "I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind." Prov. 1: 26, 27.

CHAPTER VI.

SIN CAUSES SHAME, AND LOSS OF SELF-RESPECT.

Different kinds of shame—Power of this emotion—Shame considered as one of the punishments of sin—Its effects—Destroys peace—Drives the sinner to conceal his guilt—Destroys self-respect—The fatal result—Shame of the vicious man—Shame often exposes guilt—Caution against two mistakes.

THERE are several kinds of shame. First, there is a sort of shameful feeling, which is very common, but which does not arise from conscience. It is sometimes sinful, as when one is ashamed of his poverty, or the body which God has given him; and it is sometimes innocent, as when a person, by a blunder, exposes himself to the laughter of others. Shame, even when it arises from such trivial causes as these, is often powerful in its effects. A slight breach of etiquette will produce a most disagreeable effect upon a sensitive person, which will not be forgotten for weeks.

When this feeling is provoked by ridicule or reproach, it is often far more disastrous. I have read in history of two men, who are said to have destroyed themselves out of pure mortification, caused by the biting satire of a poet, whose anger they had aroused. One of the pupils of Pythagoras was so sensibly affected by a reprimand, which his teacher administered to him in the presence of all the rest, that he could not survive the disgrace, and killed himself.

But with this kind of emotion I have nothing to do, here; I mention it merely to show the power of shame, even when it is not aggravated by a reproving conscience. There is a shame, however, which arises from doing wrong, and which is one of the punishments of sin; and I shall now endeavor to show what the effects of this emotion are upon the sinner.

1. It destroys his peace. The fruits of sin are always bitter; and the experience of every sinner will confirm this truth. While a person is under the influence of shame, he is incapable of happiness.

2. It is apt to make the sinner conceal his guilt. Instead of repenting of it, and acknowledging it, he is ashamed of what he has done, and seeks to cover it up, thus making his condition more hopeless. When Adam fell, a feeling of deep mortification rushed into his soul, and he hid himself from God,—the same God in whose smile he had just before delighted, and who had manifested nothing but kindness toward him. Every sinner, since that unhappy day, has felt more or less of this feeling, impelling him to hide his sin, rather than frankly confess it, and seek forgiveness. Reader, how is it with you? Has *shame* never induced you to conceal from your friends, perhaps by means of a falsehood, some act of which you have been guilty? And now is this a trifling evil? Is it not a melancholy sight to behold one hiding his sins when he ought to confess and renounce them, apparently unconcerned for the guilt he has incurred, if he may but escape the censure of men?

3. It is the tendency of shame to destroy our self-respect. Every one knows that self-

respect is a very important part of our nature. God gave it to us, that we might set a proper estimate upon ourselves, our faculties, and our destiny, and not live like the brutes that perish;—that we might be allied to the bright beings of a better world, and be led to aspire to the joys they inherit. But sin aims a deadly blow at all this. It produces shame, and thus weakens self-respect, so that after the sinner has once entered the forbidden path, there is a strong impulse drawing him downward. At length he loses his noblest qualities,—his manliness and sense of dignity have departed, and the way is open for speedy ruin. Then he feels the utmost truth of that passage, "And they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations." Eze. 6: 9. Then he looks upon himself as unfit for heaven, and every motive that can be urged only drives him farther from hope, and sinks him deeper in sin. Remember, then, that no one can pursue a course of open sin, without losing his self-respect, in a great degree.

If we look upon a person who has plunged headlong into degrading vice, we have a vivid illustration of this truth. How often does an intolerable feeling of shame rankle in the bosom of such a person, even in the midst of his mad career! At the rebuke of virtue, he stands abashed; and perhaps even the presence or look of a virtuous person will cover him with shame and contempt. Look, also, at the guilty criminal, at the bar of justice, and you behold another illustration. As he stands before a judge of spotless integrity, and a jury composed of upright men, what burning and almost insupportable shame rests upon him, while his secret deeds of guilt are brought to light, and his conduct is sternly and severely rebuked by all in his presence. God once said of some sinners of old, "Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel," Hos. 10: 6; and he remembers this, at the present day, when he deals with his enemies.

4. Shame is sometimes made a still greater evil to the sinner, by exposing his guilt. Although it naturally leads him to cover up

his sin, yet it sometimes turns traitor, and brings him to punishment, if he has transgressed human laws, when he would not otherwise be suspected. "The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not." Is. 3: 9. It has been said, that "guiltiness would speak, though tongues were out of use;" and here we see this truth verified. A slight blush, a confused look of shame and fear,—how often have these trivial circumstances betrayed guilt, and bore witness to the power of conscience within!

Before closing this subject, I wish to guard my reader against two mistakes, to which some may be exposed. First, let no one understand me to say, that every act of sin produces immediate shame, or that all experience alike the power of this emotion. This is not true. As some are more exposed to fear than others, so some feel shame more keenly and more frequently than their neighbors. But yet every sinner knows something of it by his own experience; and, therefore, it should be regarded as one of the universal

consequences of sin. Could you, at one view, survey all the inhabitants of the world, and look into their thoughts, as well as behold their countenances, you would doubtless be surprised to find how few there are free from this emotion. And were men seen as they *are*, there would be even more and far deeper shame than there is in the world; but they are careful to conceal their hearts, and thus escape it, for a season.

Again, let no one suppose that shame is *always* injurious to the sinner. Like the other effects of sin, it sometimes induces him to leave the path of vice, or dishonesty, or whatever sin he has fallen into, and become virtuous and upright; and thus it exerts a beneficial influence upon him. Still, in itself, and generally in its results, it causes great evil to the sinner. God has ordained that it shall form one of the cords in the sinner's scourge, in this life; and while there is sin here, shame will ever be ready to inflict its share of punishment. "I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten." Jer. 23: 40.

CHAPTER VII.

SIN INJURES THE CONSCIENCE.

The floating alarm whistle—An emblem of conscience—Important design of conscience—Sin perverts and darkens it—The heathen murderer—The superstitious pagan—The conscience of pagans always perverted—A Jewish illustration—Perversion of conscience in Christian lands—A Roman Catholic's conscience—Sin sears the conscience—The process—A seared conscience a great evil—Disease and death without pain or warning—An unnatural and dangerous state—An important thought.

Among the numerous inventions which have been made for the preservation of life and property on the ocean, is one called the "floating alarm whistle," designed to be placed where there is danger from shoals or rocks. It is so constructed, that the motion of the waves upon it produces a continual sound, which may be heard for several miles; and, by a beautiful arrangement, when the weather is unusually rough, the power of the whistle is doubled, so as always to be heard

above the raging of the storm. The mariner, approaching the place of danger during the night, or in a dense fog, may thus always be warned of his peril, and escape shipwreck, by giving heed to the faithful monitor.

In this ingenious and humane contrivance, there is something that reminds me very forcibly of that faculty of men, to which allusion was made in a previous chapter, called *conscience*. There seems to be a striking resemblance, in some points, between the two. Conscience, like the alarm whistle, is a humane and kind provision, intended to warn of dangers unseen and unknown, and thus to save from destruction; and, when in a healthy condition, the greater the danger, the louder is its warning. God has withdrawn himself from direct communion with us, on account of our sin; he suffers us to be tossed about with storms and tempests, on the voyage of life, without a pilot or a guide; but he has given us a chart (the Bible), and also placed within us a monitor, which not only has the power to alarm and admonish us, when we are driving upon rocks and shoals,

but which also reproves and punishes us, when we go astray, and commends and encourages us, when we are in the right. It is a blessed gift, and one whose value is not half appreciated. When enlightened and cultivated, it is a powerful shield against every attack of evil within. Had sin let it alone, there would be far less wickedness in the world than there is. But sin's deadly touch has been upon it, to mar and derange its operations, as we shall now see.

There are two ways in which sin injures the conscience, as intimated in the title of this chapter: 1. By perverting it. 2. By searing it.

First, sin perverts or darkens conscience, so that, after a while, it calls good evil, and evil good. A degraded native of India once murdered his wife, and was condemned to death. When a missionary visited him, and endeavored to awaken his soul to a sense of its guilt, he replied, "I have done no harm, —I have only killed my wife,—why should I be hung for that?" Here was a darkened and perverted conscience. The guilty hus-

band had probably been taught that it was no crime to injure or even murder a female; and as he had always seen others act upon this principle, and had become familiar with it, his conscience approved the evil deed, though he was condemned to death for it.

Take another illustration. A missionary, among another people, once requested a native to go and buy some fowls for him. The latter, knowing they were to be killed, replied, "I am afraid of the crime," and refused to do the errand. Crime to buy fowls! Yes, so this man's perverted conscience told him. And yet, can you believe it, this same man not a week before endeavored to *sell two of his children* to this missionary! Thus we may be taught to "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

In the histories of heathen nations, we occasionally meet with a bright and noble exception to the degradation, cruelty and superstition which characterize the mass of the people. But still we can generally trace the effects of a misguided conscience. Socrates, who is believed to have been as pure

and exalted a character as the pagan world ever produced, fell into not a few errors, from this cause, which have left a dark blemish on his reputation. And thus has it ever been with the conscience unenlightened with the word of God.

But a perverted conscience is not always confined to pagan darkness. Saul of Tarsus, though he inherited the privileges of a Roman citizen, was a Jew and a Pharisee. His talents were great, and his education of a high order. A pupil of Gamaliel, he enjoyed rare facilities for becoming a master of Jewish law. He was familiar with the sacred volume of inspiration, then in the possession of his countrymen. But, with all this, who was ever betrayed into greater errors and sins by an evil conscience? Under its sanction and influence, he was goaded on almost to madness, in destroying the defenceless and harmless disciples of Christ. And for these bloody persecutions, conscience commended him, and told him that he was doing God a service, and preparing for himself an honorable place in Abraham's bosom. O, what

infatuation! What a terrible thing is conscience, when it is thus permitted to drive on its victim in darkness and ignorance, amid perils and dangers unseen, regardless of the consequences!

Let not these illustrations lead my readers to suppose that Jews and pagans alone are guilty of perverting their consciences. What sin did for them, it does for many of us. It is often true of those who live in Christian lands, and are brought up, as it were, in the sanctuary of the true God, that "their mind and conscience is defiled." Each one has it in his power to blind this monitor, to a certain extent; and by long practice and diligent training, it can generally be made to accommodate itself to any darling sin. To do this, you have only to shut the light from it, and to resist its monitions. Soon it will be perverted, darkened and defiled, so as to countenance evil, and to frown upon good.

A singular illustration of the unhappy effects of a perverted conscience recently occurred within my own observation. An Irish domestic was suddenly seized with

what appeared to be a mingled emotion of fear and remorse; and in the bitterness of her soul she was heard exclaiming, "O, I shall go to hell! O God, forgive me! O, save me!" She thus continued her cries for some time, attesting her sincerity by her tears, and at the same time wringing her hands, as if in great suffering. What could be the matter? Had she been guilty of some fearful crime, which seemed to seal her eternal ruin, or had conscience just awakened from a long slumber, and begun to set her sins in order before her? No, neither of these is the true answer. It was Friday; and, carelessly forgetting this fact, she had just eaten some *meat*,—thereby disobeying that command of the Roman Catholic church, which prohibits flesh on "all Fridays of the year," as the Catechism expresses it! This was the whole of her offence; and the darkened and perverted conscience of the poor woman, which had from infancy been held in bondage to the superstitions and errors of popery, literally *tormented* her for performing a perfectly innocent act.

2. But, reader, your conscience is exposed to another fearful evil, while you remain in sin;—it may become *seared*. The apostle Paul speaks of those who give heed to seducing spirits, and sin against God, "having their conscience seared with a hot iron." 1 Tim. 4: 2. By this it is meant, that it may be so resisted and violated, as to lose its life and power, at least for a season. Every sin committed against it lessens its power, and breaks down the barriers it has raised in the soul. Under this harsh treatment, its voice becomes feeble, and soon gives place to silence; but it is the silence of moral death. The struggles and smartings which were lately felt in the soul, are succeeded by a calm; but it is the awful calm of the grave. As one, in freezing, after the first painful sensation is over, no longer feels the cold, and imagines himself warm and comfortable, even while death's icy fingers are laid upon his heart, so the sinner, whose conscience is benumbed in sin, thinks not of the work of death that is going on in his soul, but imagines himself safe, because

all is quiet and peaceful there. Dreadful delusion! He is like the sailor, upon a calm but deceitful sea, without chart, or buoy, or light-house, to warn him of dangers which his eye cannot discover.

A seared conscience is one of the greatest evils that can afflict a human being. Far better to writhe under its tortures, and to endure almost any amount of suffering from its scorpion lash; for then there is some hope of amendment and recovery. But there can be none, while the conscience is completely paralyzed. Consumption, in New England, is considered a dreadful disease, because so insidious and deceitful in its attacks. Suppose, however, it should come upon its victim unawares, fasten upon the vital parts of his system, and then silently do its fatal work, without causing one pang, or symptom of disease, till, in a moment, life was extinguished, like the putting out of a candle. Would it not be deemed a far more dreadful disease than it is now? Yes, every one would say, let me know that the work of death has begun, though this knowledge cost

me racking pains and an aching heart. Recovery is not impossible, if we are seasonably warned of the disease. Precisely so is it with conscience. Who wishes to live quietly at ease, while the dreadful disease of *moral* death is advancing in his soul every hour? Who would not wish to have conscience torment him day and night, rather than that it should lie down in silence, and see death strike his arrows into the soul, one by one, without uttering a note of warning? If the sentinel upon the watch-tower is faithless, who shall give the alarm when foes approach?

Reader, if this fatal process has commenced upon your conscience, you ought to be alarmed. Should you discover to-day that you could cut and lacerate your body without causing pain, how would it alarm you! You would know that it was in some dangerously unnatural state. But what do you think of your conscience, when you can sin against it every hour of your life, perhaps, without its occasioning one rebuke, or one pang of remorse? Is not your moral being in a fearfully diseased and unnatural state? It must be so.

One word more. When conscience becomes thus hardened and seared, do not suppose that it is *dead.* Many fall into this mistake, and flatter themselves that they shall be no more troubled with its complaints and scourges. But it is not dead; or, if it is, there is soon to be a fearful *resurrection,* which shall send terror through the guilty soul. Beware of this, ere the admonition be too late.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIN HARDENS THE HEART.

Augustus N——, or the progress of crime—Three important points illustrated — The heart susceptible at first, but quickly hardened by sin—A great change—The hardened murderer—Good instruction no safeguard against hardness of heart—Nor youth—The young murderer—A narrow escape from ruin—The great evil of a hard heart—Does God harden men's hearts ?—A superintendent's illustration —The heart hardened by judgments—God's method with certain great sinners—An admonition.

AUGUSTUS N—— was an uncommonly promising boy. Every attention that fond parents could bestow upon an only son, was freely lavished upon him. As he early discovered a fondness for books, his father determined to give him a liberal education; and accordingly he was sent to a high-school, where he made such rapid progress, that he was soon placed at college. Here he distinguished himself for his scholarship, and, after four years, graduated, with the honors

of the institution. He then commenced the study of law, and at an early age obtained license to practise.

In the fall of 1833, Augustus left his native State, New Jersey, and, flushed with the brilliant prospects of success that lay before him, directed his face to the West. The blessing of his parents, and the kind admonitions of his friends, followed him, as he left his early home. He soon found himself on board a steamboat, bound for Louisville; and, to while away the time, it was proposed to play a game of cards. He had determined to avoid all such things; but, thinking there could be no harm in playing a game for *amusement*, he consented to join the party. After a time it was proposed to bet a small sum on the game, merely, as it was said, to give an interest to it. The first impression of our young lawyer was, to leave the table; but he could lose at most only one or two dollars, and his companions would think he was a mean man, if he should withdraw. He played the game, and, unfortunately, he won. Again and again he

played, and still was successful; but, alas, his success ruined him.

Mr. N—— soon after settled in a thriving village in Tennessee, and commenced his practice under very flattering auspices. But the thirst for gaming which he contracted on board the steamboat, now grew upon him rapidly. One night, he won $200; and, in honor of his success, his companions insisted that he should treat. He complied; and, before they separated, all the party were deeply intoxicated! With Mr. N. it was the first time; and on the following day, stung with remorse, he resolved never again to play a game of cards. After about three months, however, he yielded to the entreaties of his dissipated associates, and once more resorted to the gaming-table, where he met with varied success. But, in all cases, he found an excuse for introducing the wine-bottle. If he won, he treated his good fortune; and if he lost, he drank to drown his sorrows. Thus drinking and gambling soon became his chief employment. Abandoned by his virtuous friends, he was speedily

reduced to want and wretchedness. While in this state, he received a letter, informing him of the death of his affectionate father; and with it was a check for $500,—a part of his father's hard earnings. He drowned his grief in a Bacchanalian revel, that night, and in a few days was again penniless.

Thus continued Mr. N. in the rapid career of crime, till he became a drunken and wandering outcast. In this condition, a letter reached him from his mother, containing $100, and informing him that she was fast sinking beneath disease, and entreating him, with all a mother's feelings, to come and see her before she died. The appeal moved him, and he took passage in a steamboat, to comply with her request. For two days he abstained from liquor, but his thirst now became insupportable, and he was soon intoxicated. He then madly sought the gaming-table, and before he was half way home, he found himself stripped of every cent, and unable to proceed. Shortly after his mother died, spending her last breath in prayer for her wretched child.

The once aspiring and talented lawyer, who had moved in the first circles of society, was now employed on board a steamer, as a deck hand; and even from this post he was soon discharged for drunkenness! The dram-shop now became his home, and gamblers and drunkards his only companions. But he was soon detected in passing a counterfeit bill, and brought before the criminal court of St. Louis, to answer to the charge. When the usual question was put to him, whether he was guilty or not, he replied, in the bitterness of his soul, "Guilty! guilty!" He was therefore convicted, and sent to the penitentiary, where he suffered the penalty of his crime.*

I have placed the foregoing narrative at the head of this chapter, because it is a good illustration of the three principal points which I now wish to set before my readers; viz.,—what is meant by hardening the heart, the way in which it is done, and the consequen-

* These instructive and interesting facts from his history, I have gathered from the eloquent address which he made before the court at his trial.

ces of doing it. You behold a vast difference between the amiable and promising youth at school, and the guilty criminal at the bar of justice. What a change a few years wrought! This, then, is what is meant by hardening the heart. You see, too, the successive steps by which he reached his climax of sin. He went on from one apparently small transgression to a greater one, and then to a still greater, at each step hardening his heart against the reproofs of his conscience and the admonitions of his friends. Here you have the process by which the heart is hardened. And, finally, you behold his prospects blasted, his character ruined, and guilt stamped upon his name; his hopes for happiness in this life, and in the life to come (unless he repent and reform), for ever cut off. Here you see some of the consequences of thus hardening the heart. The narration, as a whole, is a striking illustration of that text, "He that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." Prov. 28: 14.

A block of granite, it is said, can be worked easier when just hewn from the

quarry, than it can be afterwards. So it is with the human heart. As it comes from the hand of God it is tender, and susceptible to good impressions. But when exposed to the influences of sin, it readily hardens, and becomes so insensible that it is difficult to make a good impression upon it. Its entire nature seems to be changed, as in the case of the young man I have referred to. Instead of responding to the voice of God, it arms itself against him, and harbors thoughts of disobedience and treachery. Then it gathers fresh courage, and grows more obstinate and self-willed,—more dead to holiness, and more in love with sin. The once tender heart is now a stone. "Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets." Zech. 7: 12. The sinner has reached such a state that the thunders of God's wrath cannot move him, nor the subduing accents and generous tears of mercy melt him to repentance.

Such a character as I have described

recently murdered his own father; and when condemned to death for the crime, he manifested the utmost indifference about his fate, and the absence of every thing like contrition, in view of his awful guilt. Even at the hour of his execution, the disgusting scene was presented, of a man whose minutes were numbered, and who was about to be ushered into the presence of an offended God, expressing his admiration of infidelity, and his detestation of Christianity; and but a moment or two before his death, he declared that if his father were yet alive, he would murder him, if he could. Dreadful depravity! Truly, it is a dangerous thing to begin to harden the heart, if such are its results.

"But," says one, "*I* have been brought up too well ever to fall into such an awful state as this." You are mistaken. Hardness of heart is frequently found in the midst of the greatest light. Think of the wonderful acts of God, performed in the sight of the Israelites, while on their way to Canaan; and yet they hardened their hearts, and were a rebellious and backsliding people. Look at

his dealings with them in subsequent ages,—his miracles of mercy, his terrific displays of wrath; and yet there were unbelievers, and infidels, and idolaters, in the midst of all this light. In the days of our Saviour, too, what multitudes who beheld his mighty works, and listened to his heavenly discourses, steeled their hearts against him, and rejected the salvation which he brought to the lost. Stout-hearted sinners are often the very ones who have enjoyed the greatest privileges and means of usefulness.

Another says, "I am young; *I* cannot be in danger from this evil." But most fearful specimens of hardness of heart are frequently exhibited among the young. I have before me an account of a murder committed not long since by a boy *fourteen* years of age! The victim was another lad still younger, and the murderer deliberately aimed a gun at him, upon a slight provocation, remarking that he "had as lief shoot him as not." Are the young, then, in no danger of hardening their hearts, till they become like the adamant stone?

I have another illustration, which, though less striking than the preceding one, shows plainly how easy it is for the young to harden their hearts, and also to what an awful extent it may be done, without leading to any outbreak of crime. Henry L—— was the son of a pious mother. He was well instructed in the principles of religion, and the watchful eye of his parent was ever on the alert, to warn him of his dangers, and prevent his falling into temptations. And yet he easily inclined to the path of vice, and began to form bad acquaintances. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, he was a great admirer of the theatre. But when he visited it, he would generally deceive his mother, by pretending that he had been to a religious meeting; and so artfully did he manage this deception, that he could describe the meeting, recite the text, and mention the chapter and verse which contained it. Thus, by cunningly arranging his plans, previously, he went to the theatre when he chose, without even exciting the suspicions of his mother. He also sometimes visited dram-shops, and

drank with his companions. In this way was this youth rapidly hardening his heart in sin, in the midst of abounding light, and preparing himself to work mischief with a high hand, when God was pleased to hear the prayers of his mother in his behalf (who little suspected the extent of his depravity, and his imminent danger), and to convert him from his follies.

There can be no doubt, then, that the hardening process is always going on in the unconverted sinner's heart. Reader, if you are not a Christian, it is at this moment going on in *your* heart. True, you may never become so vicious and depraved as to fall into gross immorality and crime; but still the work is silently going on. So defiling are the effects of sin upon the heart, that every one who would become pious, must have a "new heart."

The chief reason why we should all dread to have our hearts become hard, is, that we should be left to commit sin with impunity. It is a sad thing to do evil; but afterwards, in full view of the sin, to feel no concern

about it, and no repentance for it, is an exceeding aggravation. There is nothing to restrain the sinner, since his conscience is seared, and his heart hardened. Especially is this true, if God does not interfere with his designs. They "put far away the evil day" of retribution, and become completely wedded to sin. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Eccl. 8: 11. On this account, I consider the hardening of the heart as one of the most alarming consequences of sin. It takes away, one by one, every hope of the sinner's conversion, and is a fearful omen that he is delivered over to destruction.

But is not God sometimes said to harden the hearts of men? A superintendent of a Sabbath school, wishing to illustrate this subject, once remarked, after the school had read the ninety-fifth psalm, that he had two specimens from the natural kingdom, to illustrate the seventh and eighth verses. He then exhibited to them a piece of beech-

wood, taken from the banks of the Ohio river, that had been subjected to the action of the water, but which, in consequence of the presence of some salts near the place, or from some other cause, had resisted this action, and, instead of dissolving as vegetable matter generally does in water, had become a hard stone. He also showed them a piece of moss, which, having fallen from the same tree, had experienced a similar change. Now, said he, every one knows that it is the nature of water to soften vegetable substances; and yet, when this process is resisted, it may produce an exactly opposite effect. So the Spirit of God, sent from heaven to strive with the sinner, may only become the instrument of hardening his heart, if resisted, though this is not its designed effect. This is one sense in which the Spirit of God is said to harden the heart.

The *judgments* of God sometimes harden the hearts of men, when they would produce a very different effect, were those hearts in a proper state. Thus it was that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh. The displays of his

power and his wrath, which he made before the Egyptian king, one would suppose, would have procured the release of Israel; but as Pharaoh hardened himself, so the Lord permitted these very trials to harden him still more. It is a solemn truth, that those judgments and afflictions which God sends upon the sinner to soften and subdue him, will, if resisted, become the instruments of producing the very opposite effects.

I think we are also taught in the Bible, that God sometimes *directly* hardens the hearts of great sinners, to punish them, and make them an example before the world. "Whom he will he hardeneth." Rom. 9: 18. When one has long hardened himself in sin, and shut his ears against the voice of God, his fellow-men, and his conscience, it is not strange if God makes use of him as "a vessel of wrath, fitted to destruction," and displays to the world the divine justice in his punishment. Thus was it with Sihon, king of Heshbon, who refused to let Israel pass through his realm, when on their journey to the promised land. Said Moses to the peo-

ple, concerning this king, "The Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand." Deut. 2: 30. A similar fate happened to nearly all the kings of Canaan, whom Israel dispossessed. "It was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come out against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly." Josh. 11: 20. These were all exceedingly wicked men, and God thus hardened their hearts to their own destruction.

Such is a feeble view of the hardening influence of sin; and in closing, I cannot do better than commend to my readers the admonition of the apostle,—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. 3: 12, 13.

CHAPTER IX.

SIN DEBASES THE MIND.

Original excellence of the mind—Effects of sin upon it—Reason or judgment perverted—The character of Christ applied as a test—The distinction between wisdom and folly lost—Also that between good and evil—The unhappy father—The mind blinded and darkened—Skepticism—Atheism—The mind engrossed by earthly objects—The miser—Chief end of life—Exposure to error—To superstition—Heathenish and Romish superstitions—Astrology—An illustration nearer home—Obtuseness of intellect—Insanity—Idiocy—The mind a channel of sin—A specimen—Prostitution of the mind to evil—The passions perverted to sin—Fearful power of these emotions—Concluding thought.

THE human mind is that part of our being which thinks and wills, remembers and reasons. In its original state, created without sin, and free from every infirmity, it might well be called a spark from the eternal Fountain of intelligence,—feeble, perhaps, at first, but destined to expand with rapidity, and become, at length, an exalted image of

Jehovah. But the touch of sin has been felt upon this, also, and its withering marks are left behind; so that, in the language of the poet, Thomson,

> "now the distempered mind
> Has lost that concord of harmonious powers,
> Which forms the soul of happiness; and all
> Is off the poise within; the passions all
> Have burst their bounds; and reason, half extinct,
> Or impotent, or else approving, sees
> The foul disorder."

Each faculty and power was created for its own sphere, and all were once in subjection to law; but now there is a sort of rebellion within the mind. Anarchy and confusion have usurped the place of order and peace; and healthful activity has given way to sluggishness and stagnation. True, there is a vast difference in the minds of persons; but all bear, in some degree, the impress of sin. Let us look at some of the particulars in which the mind has suffered.

1. The first thing we notice, is, that we often find the reason or judgment so perverted and blunted, that it is unable to discern

between right and wrong. This, certainly, must be the effect of sin upon the mind and heart; for it is not the state in which Adam was created. This is exhibited very clearly in the case of those who grow up without the knowledge of the Bible. Those, too, who wilfully neglect it, are greatly exposed to the same evil. The distinction between right and wrong, in the minds of such, becomes less plain, as they accustom themselves to the latter. At length they cannot even discern the difference between holiness and sin. If they read that the moral law is holy and perfect, they will dispute the fact, and perhaps suggest improvements. The complaint that was made of Ephraim, is applicable to them,—"I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a *strange thing*." Hos. 8: 12. If you point them to the beauty of the law, as exemplified in our Saviour, they realize no force in the illustration. "I see no beauty in Christ, that I should desire him," said an impenitent sinner, just on the verge of life. He declared his firm belief in the truths of the gospel, and

the reality of future happiness and misery; but his moral sense was so blunted that he could not perceive the beauty and excellency of holiness, or the hideousness of sin. I have heard people express the opinion that they could live even better than did our Saviour! "He was, on the whole, an excellent man," they said, "but we discover serious faults in his character." I need not say, that no one, in his right mind, would ever make such a foolish remark as this, whose moral perceptions of right and wrong were not almost obliterated. Such men might well attempt to polish the sun, or gild burnished gold, or paint in gaudy colors the most brilliant gems; for they would improve that character which is brighter than the sun, purer than fine gold, and more beautiful than precious gems.

2. The distinction between wisdom and folly is also frequently lost by the sinner. After he has pursued his own ways for a time, he seems to believe,—if we may judge from his conduct,—that there is no wisdom but sin, and no folly but holiness. The things of the Spirit are foolishness unto him;

but the artful teachings of Satan are all wisdom. Even the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish. No one can deny the truth of this; and what a sad perversity of mind does it exhibit!

3. Sinners frequently rejoice in evil, and mourn over good; and this is another evidence that sin has debased their minds as well as souls. I have in my mind an individual, whose history is an exemplification of this truth. He has the appearance of one who is disgusted with life, and tired of existence. He is miserable in his own mind, and morose in his disposition to those about him. And what is the cause of this? Has he lost his property, or his health? No, this is not his trouble. Have his children wandered into paths of vice, and thus planted thorns in his breast? No, this is not his sorrow. But what is it? Why, poor man, his children have all been hopefully converted, and united with the church, and he alone is left behind. This is his sorrow. He would gladly have them join in the giddy dance, and mingle in the circle of fashion; but they care not

for these things. One by one they have renounced the world, and but lately the last and youngest, the only hope of his unhappy father, followed the steps of the others, and joined the church of Christ. To the perverted mind of their parent, this act is their ruin; and henceforth, unless he, too, shall experience a mighty change, there seems to be nothing in the world to smooth his declining years. This is a strange picture, but it is a true one.

4. The blindness and darkness of the mind is another of the effects of sin upon it. The Bible declares that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Our Saviour taught, that the design of the gospel is to *open the eyes* of men; he came to preach receiving of sight to the blind. This language refers to blindness of mind,—not of the body. Paul speaks of the Gentiles, as "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph. 4: 18. For this reason, sinners blind themselves

against the light of revelation, and refuse the warm and cheerful rays of the gospel an admittance into their hearts; and soon they challenge divine truth, and question the reality of religion; as the owl,

> "Sailing on obscene wings athwart the moon,
> Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
> And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
> Cries out, Where is it?"

The secret skepticism thus fostered, often manifests itself at an early age. Says the excellent Cecil, "I never gathered from infidel writers, while an avowed infidel myself, any solid difficulties, which were not afterwards brought to my mind by a very young child of my own." He therefore concludes that such infidel objections are the natural growth of fallen nature.

But the blinded and insane mind does not stop here. Despising reason, revelation and God, it rushes with delirious fury against "the bossy shield of the Omnipotent," and toils "with dark and crooked reasoning," to aim a death-blow at the only hope of man,

and exalt the idol, Chance, to the throne of the Almighty! "No God! No heaven! No hell!" is its blasphemous creed, its fearful motto.

"Guilt's midnight wish! last, most abhorred thought!
Most desperate effort of extremest sin!"

5. Another evidence that the mind is debased by sin, is, that it is so engrossed with earthly and transitory things, and thinks so little of the excellence of heavenly and eternal realities. Though it is itself spiritual, yet how often is its range of thought confined to material objects. When the Duke de Alva was asked if he had observed a late eclipse, he replied that "he had so much to do upon the earth, he had no time to look up at the heavens." So is it with vast multitudes, whose minds are busy with trifles, while the solemn scenes of the world above are closely shut out from their view. They have no time to look above. Some are the slaves of Mammon; and their minds are tasked only to increase their gold, or secure it safe when obtained. What an occupation, to be im-

posed upon an immortal mind! In the newspapers of the day, we frequently meet with paragraphs like the following:

"A desperate miser lately died in England, at the age of eighty-one. His death was occasioned by exhaustion, in consequence of denying himself the necessities of life."—"A miser, named Ashers, residing in a wretched hovel, near Nottingham, England, recently died from over-exertion, in carrying his coals from a distance, because he got them a half-penny cheaper. On searching his premises, money and property to the value of $5000 were found."

Thus have millions of our race, turning from every other object, bowed before the golden god, and sacrificed upon its polluted altar every thing that is good,—yea, life itself; and, in the language of Pollok,

"To complete the horrid, murderous rite,
And signalize their folly, offered up
Their souls, and an eternity of bliss,
To gain them,—what? An hour of dreaming joy;
A feverish hour, that hasted to be done,
And ended in the bitterness of wo."

But the miser is not the only one whose mind is shrivelled up to the contemplation of earthly and material things. When Anaxagoras was asked to what end he was born, he replied, "To contemplate the sun, moon and stars." A very foolish answer, truly; but many who live in Christian lands, if their actions do not belie them, fall as far short of the true end of life as did this ancient heathen. One thinks he has no object to pursue but sensual pleasure; and he lives as though for this alone he was created. To another, this world is but a theatre, on which he is to win a few laurels of honor and glory. And a third lives as though he were placed here only to work evil.

6. The liability of the mind to fall into error, is another evidence that all is not right. Having partially lost the distinction between right and wrong, and become blinded by sin, it is imminently exposed to embrace error, even when it seeks after truth. And then prejudice comes in, to blind it still more, and chain it firmly to its erroneous opinions. There is, probably, no truth in science, phi-

losophy or religion, which has not been furiously assailed and contradicted. There is no error, however absurd and blasphemous, which Satan ever suggested to the heart of man, which has not been defended. There is no scheme too wild and fanciful to allure the mind, no hope too groundless for it to embrace. How many rest their hopes of heaven upon a spider's web, which must inevitably be swept away at the hour of death, and all the while firmly believe themselves eternally safe! In their ignorance, they build an edifice on the sand, not knowing that the floods and the tempests will soon destroy it.

7. And, again, how many run into superstitions and vagaries, to which a holy mind must be a stranger. Many of these superstitions are more cruel than death. Could you spend a week in India, and see with your own eyes the dreadful suffering which the worshipers of heathen gods inflict upon their own bodies, under the influence of a horrid superstition, your heart would sicken within you. But this evil also exists, though in a

less cruel form, in nominally Christian lands. In Russia, for instance, the people regulate their whole lives, and especially their domestic arrangements, not according to nature and reason, but by certain religious festivals, which are, once for all, established as the times for doing certain things. "Thus," says a traveler in that country, "cattle are turned out, not when there is grass for them to eat, but on the seventeenth of April, because it is St. Stephen's day, when the priest blesses and sprinkles them with holy water. In like manner, they do not begin ploughing when the weather is favorable, but on St. Gregory's day, who gives success to the operation. Apples are not gathered when they are ripe, but on the festival of Virgin Mary, in August. An apple eaten before that day is liable to operate like poison; but after it, unripe fruit is not hurtful, even to infants at the breast; and if flux or inflammation ensue, and carry them off, it was the will of God."*

* Kohl's Russia in 1842.

I mention this, not because it is a remarkable instance, but merely to illustrate the truth, that sin has strongly inclined the human mind to superstition. Volumes might be filled with similar accounts, collected from every quarter of the globe. Nor is this evil confined solely to the ignorant and degraded. The absurd system of *astrology*, which has for ages been so general, and even at the present day is in its pristine glory in Persia, originated with the wise men and philosophers of the earth. "The study of the heavenly bodies," says Rollin, in his Ancient History, "was so far from leading them, as it ought to have done, to the knowledge of him who is both their Creator and Ruler, that for the most part it carried them into impiety, and the extravagances of judicial astrology. So we term that deceitful and presumptuous science which teaches to judge of things to come by the knowledge of the stars, and to foretell events by the situation of the planets, and by their different aspects." To show what power this gigantic superstition has held over the minds of men, I will mention

one fact. About five centuries ago, a great plague swept over the earth, which is supposed to have destroyed nearly 25,000,000 of people; and the origin of this horrid distemper was completely accounted for by one Guy de Chaudiac, who maintained that it was occasioned by the grand conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, in the sign of Aquarius!

Even in our own land, and in the midst of the light of New England, there are not wanting examples of superstition. It was but recently that a young woman died, in one of these States, in consequence of breaking a looking-glass. The superstition which many people connect with an accident of this kind, so overpowered her feelings as to cause her death. But we find that in proportion as the light of the gospel spreads, and the minds of men become sanctified with religion, these weak superstitions give way, like mists before the rising sun.

8. Obtuseness or stupidity of mind is another of the evils of our sinful state. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his mas-

ter's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider." Is. 1: 3. Thus the Scriptures represent the ox and the ass (counted generally among the most stupid of animals) as knowing more of their masters than the unenlightened sinner knows of his Maker. Sin has so blighted some nations and tribes, that there seems to be little or no difference between their intellects, and the sagacious instinct of the dog, the horse, and other intelligent animals. One of the greatest obstacles the missionary meets with, is the obtuseness and decay of intellect, caused by a life of heathenish degradation.

9. The diseases to which the mind is subject, is another evidence that sin has wrought an unhappy change upon it. We are all exposed to *insanity*,—a mental distemper dreaded by all, even in its mildest forms. I will not harrow your feelings by attempting to portray the dreadful fury of the madman, or the black despair of the delirious. But could you spend an hour in an insane hospital, and see these sickening sights with your own eyes, you would confess that *some-*

thing has made fearful havoc with the human mind. That something,—I need not tell you what it is. Scenes like these were never witnessed where God's law is not broken.

Idiocy is another disease of the mind. Many are born in this state, and never can become capable of reasoning, inventing, computing, &c. Others, who once possessed a sound mind, have, when a sudden calamity overtook them, been in a moment deprived of this inestimable blessing, and become complete idiots.

Such are some of the evils which the mind itself experiences, on account of sin. In addition to all this, it is also made a medium or channel of sin, and its noble powers are perverted to the basest ends. Take the power of *imagination*, for instance. How often is it suffered to linger around forbidden objects, till the sinner grows bold from familiarity with the sin contemplated, and at last plunges into guilt and ruin. Giving the reins to a wanton imagination, is one of the first steps in sin, and it has ruined thousands of young men and women, especially in large

cities, where so many seductions are spread for youth. Thus this same attribute of the mind, which, when sanctified by religion, may plume its wing, and bear the soul to heaven, to enjoy the smile of God, and the society of the blest, is made the instrument, when under the power of sin, of plunging it into the deepest guilt. How important that the mind be redeemed from sin, and consecrated to God!

We often see the truth, stated at the commencement of the last paragraph, illustrated in another way. The noble faculties of the mind are taught to waste their energies in contriving evil, and exhaust their ingenuity in perverting that which is good. The blessings which Heaven showers down so plentifully upon us, are thus converted into ministers of evil. The Bible, intended to radiate heavenly beams upon our path, is made to shed an uncertain and flickering light; and, like the oracles of ancient days, its utterings are applied by each to suit himself, and its teachings perverted to every base end. So strong is this tendency in the

sinner's heart, that I verily believe, were the tree of life itself within the reach of man, its fruits would be distilled, and fermented, and worked upon, till, if it were possible, poison and death were produced from them.

Thus far, I have spoken only of the *intellectual powers* of the mind, as suffering in consequence of sin. Before closing, I must say a few words concerning the *passions*, as the various emotions of the soul are usually called. We find that these are all frequently perverted to sinful ends. Love is bestowed upon unworthy objects, and binds the sinner to his evil ways; while pure, heaven-born affection often dies entirely out of his heart. Joy is frequently awakened by that which ought to call forth grief. Desire degenerates into lust and covetousness. Hatred, instead of being exercised towards that which is sinful, is directed even against God himself. Fear, instead of warning the sinner of the evils of sin, often drives him from the company of the righteous. And hope, instead of being a star in the surrounding darkness, to cheer the soul, and

invite to heaven, becomes a false beacon light, alluring into danger and death. We have already had occasion to illustrate the workings of several of these perverted passions in the unsanctified heart, and have seen that they produce nought but evil and misery. They were given us for a very different end; but the principle of evil within has claimed them as its own, and armed them against the best interests of the soul. Alas for the sinner, when these passions are completely under the power of the adversary!

Besides the emotions above enumerated,—all of which, in their pure state, exist in holy beings,—there are others, which sin has introduced into our minds,—such as anger, grief, envy, pride, jealousy, shame, discontent, despair, etc. These are all the direct offspring of sin; and what a scorpion brood do they compose! What numberless miseries do they inflict upon unhappy man! They rudely trample upon every affection, and strip honor of her sacredness; they dig the grave of happiness, and stab peace to the heart; they mock at goodness, and shoot

their poisoned darts into the bosom of innocence; their commission is to ferment evil and to work sorrow and torment, and most faithfully do they fulfil it. They are, in short, the ingredients of hell.

The power which the passions possess over the body is remarkable, and I cannot but regard this as another illustration of the derangement which sin has occasioned in our natures. There is scarcely a passion which may not, by excess of action, inflict an injury upon the body. Anger, grief, love and joy have frequently caused death. Even hope, when too strongly excited, has produced insanity; and several other of the emotions I have named have often inflicted serious injury upon those who too freely indulged them.

I have thus endeavored to show my readers what effect sin has produced upon the human mind. When we contrast it with what it once was, and might now have been, and see the great change it has endured, we may well exclaim, "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" Lam. 4: 1.

CHAPTER X.

SIN DEGRADING AND BRUTALIZING.

Young Rupert and old Randal—The degrading tendency of sin—The inebriate—It is not necessary to be vicious, to be degraded—Effects of sin upon nations—A battle scene—Instruments of cruelty—A glance at the heathen world—How infidels account for man's degradation—The true solution of the mystery.

A PAINTER, wishing to draw a picture of innocence, selected for his model a little child, named Rupert, and represented him kneeling in prayer, with his mild blue eyes raised to heaven, and the palms of his tiny hands pressed together in reverence. A sweet expression of devotion, peace and innocence rested upon his countenance, and an additional interest was added to the scene by the tender look of his mother, at whose side he kneeled. When the portrait was finished, the painter hung it up in his study, and ever after he prized it very highly; for

he had spent much time and care upon it. He named it INNOCENCE.

Many years after, when the painter had become an aged man, he formed the design of painting a contrast to his picture of Innocence, which still adorned his study. For some time he sought for a striking illustration of his subject, but in vain. At length, however, he accomplished his object by visiting a prison. Before him, on the damp floor of a dungeon, lay a wretched culprit, named Randal, who seemed the personification of degradation and guilt. His body was wasted, his cheek sunken and pale, and his eye expressed no emotion but that of complete and hopeless wretchedness. More than this, his face was stamped with vice, and infamy and guilt were branded on his brow. The painter seized his pencil, and having copied to the life the criminal before him, he bore the picture to his study, and placed it by the side of the other, calling it GUILT.

But who, think you, was the young and lovely Rupert, whom the artist selected as a model of innocence and devotion? And

who was the other,—that old and hardened culprit, loaded with irons, whose tongue uttered only blasphemies and curses? Alas! the two were one! Young Rupert, the innocent, and old Randal, the guilty, were the same, though not the least resemblance could now be traced between the two.

Young reader, I have transferred this striking story to my pages, as an illustration of the solemn truth, that sin degrades and brutalizes those who indulge in it. A few years spent in the paths of sin and vice, produced the wonderful contrast exhibited in those portraits. Nor is this strange. It is the direct tendency of sin to degrade, as I shall endeavor to show, in the present chapter. It has sunk angels lower than the brutes; and wherever it has gone, it has carried with it degradation, as well as wo. It lowers the sinner, not only in the opinion of all holy beings, but also in his own eyes, destroying his self-respect, as we saw in a previous chapter.

Let us look first at the openly *vicious*. No one will dispute that *they* are descending

at every step. Mark the man who loves intoxicating drinks. Gradually his habit gains upon him, and steals away, one by one, every thing that constitutes a man. His affections, however strong and sincere, must give way, so that he can witness, unmoved, the sufferings of those whom he once counted more dear than his own life; sufferings, too, inflicted solely by his own hand. His intellect, however highly endowed and liberally cultivated, must bow before the destroyer, and suffer itself to be consumed by the rust and corroding of neglect. His moral principles,—the legacy, it may be, of a mother now in heaven,—must be trodden down beneath the defiled feet of vice. Thus one noble attribute after another gives way before the flood of sin, till at length a clean breach is made over the miserable man. Robbed of his affections, his reason and his moral principle, stripped of his property and his apparel, and even with a body disfigured and a constitution ruined,—I ask, can you conceive of a degradation more vile than this? Is he not sunk far below the brutes? The

same is true of those who fall into gambling, lewdness, or any other vice or excess. No wonder, then, that such are spoken of in the Bible as "natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed," and who "shall utterly perish in their own corruption." 2 Pe. 2 : 12.

But it is not needful to plunge into vice, to ascertain the fact that sin is degrading. Even those who are looked upon as moral and virtuous, are often the subjects of the same degradation, though not to an equal extent. If they do not obey that great law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," then they debase their natures, and do violence to their own souls. Dr. South has drawn a brief but vivid picture of this degradation, in the following words:—"The wicked and sensual part of the world are only concerned to find room and scope enough to wallow in; if they can but have it, whence they have it troubles not their thoughts; saying grace is no part of their meal; they feed and grovel like swine under an oak, filling themselves with the mast; but never so much as looking

up either to the boughs that bear, or the hands that shook it down." In the language of Gowing, the man of the world is "an immortal being, that would lose none of his *most* darling delights, if he were a brute in the mire; but would lose them all entirely, if he were an angel in heaven." Strange language, this! but alas, it is too true.

The evil of which I am speaking is frequently illustrated on a large scale, in nations and communities; and it may be profitable for us, in the present case, to turn from ourselves, and look at men in classes.

People have thought, in every age of the world, that powerful armies, and great territories, and strong fortifications, and costly works of art, and boundless wealth and prosperity, gave honor and dignity to a nation. But in the Bible we are taught better. We are there told that "*righteousness* exalteth a nation." If this is true, then is it not equally true, that *sin* degrades it? What says the word of God? "As they were increased, so hey sinned against me; therefore will I change their glory into shame." Hos. 4: 7.

This was spoken by a prophet of the Lord, concerning Israel. Another prophet, after mentioning the sins of the priests, says to them, in the name of God, "Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways." Mal. 2: 9. Thus sin turned their glory to shame, and degraded them before the world.

What a specimen of the worse than brutal degradation of man do we see in a battle! Go with me, for a few moments, on board a man-of-war at sea. It is Sabbath morning, and the large crew, dressed in their holiday attire, are idling away the sacred hours. But suddenly the man at the mast-head discovers a sail in the distance. It excites curiosity, and is eagerly watched, till at last it is seen to be a large ship. All eyes are now strained toward it, and the sailors begin to whisper to one another their opinions respecting it. At length the captain inquires of the man at the look-out, "What does she look like?" "A large frigate, bearing down upon us, sir," is the reply. Suspicions are now heard that

she is an enemy; and soon the command goes forth, "All hands clear the ship for action, ahoy!" The drum beats to quarters, the horrid preparation commences, and soon all is ready for the work of death. The colors of the approaching ship are run up, and now all doubt is at an end. A battle is inevitable. There is not the slightest provocation by either. Neither party knows aught of the other, except that it bears the flag of a hostile nation. But this is enough,—they are *enemies*, by birth, fortune or fate, and the work of destruction commences.

A few random shots are fired, as a prelude; and then the hideous roar of cannon, and the whistling of balls in the air, stun and bewilder the senses. The ship trembles and rolls beneath the dreadful assault, and as the heavy shot strike her sides, she shakes to her very keel; and a scene of horror and confusion ensues, beyond the power of description. To use the language of one who has himself witnessed such scenes, "it is like some awfully tremendous thunder-storm, whose deafening roar is attended by incessant streaks of

lightning, carrying death in every flash, and strewing the ground with the victims of its wrath." The iron hail and leaden rain fall thick upon the crew, and torrents of blood flow over the decks. The cries of the wounded and dying ring through the ship, as they are hurried below to the surgeon. Two boys, yonder, have fallen; one was struck in the leg by a large shot, and must suffer the amputation of the limb; the other is shot through the ancle, and must lose a foot. Another lad, who was badly burnt by powder, while lifting up his imploring hands in agony, is instantly cut in two by a passing shot. A man, one of whose hands was shot off a moment ago, is now horribly mutilated by another ball; and as he cannot live, he is quickly thrown overboard by his comrades. The next victim is an officer, who is struck by a ball near the heart. The head of another is shot off, and a multitude of others have either fallen in death, or received their death-wounds. Still the survivors fight like tigers, and cheer and shout with all their might, apparently as merry and thoughtless

as though it were all a sham-fight. But at last the work of carnage ceases, the victory is decided, and the flag of the conquered is struck. The proud frigate, which a few hours before was freighted with peace, and hope, and pleasure, is now but a miserable wreck,—a floating hospital,—a theatre of death and wo.

Perhaps this sketch, which I have taken from authentic history, will give the reader some feeble idea of a battle between two vessels of war. You will, with me, pray that you may never witness such a dreadful scene. But, after all, this is a small affair, in comparison with wars and battles, where the slain have been numbered by tens or scores of thousands, and where cities, provinces and whole countries have been laid waste. And all this, reader, is the work of man, civilized man,—man, with the Bible in his hand! Say, is not this degradation of the lowest kind? Whence comes it but from sin?

Think, too, of the innumerable instruments of cruelty which man has invented to assist him in this savage, murderous work, and see

another evidence of his degradation. He has taxed his ingenuity to the utmost, to provide means to beat, tear, bruise, pierce, cut, mangle, batter and destroy the human form. Should you visit some great national armory,—the Tower of London, for instance, —this thought would doubtless be deeply impressed upon you, as you beheld the array of cross-bows, halderds, arquebuses, haquebuts, demihaques, halberts, spears, daggers, swords, sabres, bayonets, lances, pikes, cannons, muskets, howitzers, mortars, dragons, blunderbusses, pistols, carbines, thumb-screws, yokes, cravats, billhooks, glaives, gisarmes, iron maces, military forks, two-headed battle-axes, beheading axes, morning-stars, military flails, and tormenting catch-poles, which are there collected together. And yet these are only a few of the murderous artillery of war! Do they not make man look like an ingenious but vindictive brute?

I have alluded to war as only *one* illustration of the tendency of sin to debase and brutalize even Christian nations. But if we turn to heathen nations, what a spectacle of

degradation do we witness! Look at the Hindoos, with their three hundred and thirty million gods, of every size, shape and color, in forms human, half human, and brutal, with four, ten or a hundred eyes, heads and arms, —gods of folly and wisdom,—gods addicted to every crime ever conceived of by the vilest imagination,—gods armed with thunderbolts, scimetars, spears, clubs, shields, bows, javelins, flags and shells. Look at the Khonds, a tribe in India, who offer human sacrifices, and strip the flesh from their victims while yet alive, each bearing his part to his own field. Look at the river Ganges, whose waters are polluted by the bodies of the dead, and whose banks are lined by self-murdering devotees, or by dying wretches, many of whom are plunged into the waves by their relatives, ere life is extinct; and all this that they may wash their souls from sin. Look at the car of Juggernaut, grinding hundreds beneath its ponderous wheels. Look at the Ashantees, in Central Africa, who sacrificed, a few years since, about one thousand human victims, on the death of their king. Look at

the Feegee and other islands, where cannibalism still prevails to a frightful extent. Think of the thousands of children who are annually murdered by their parents in Asia, Africa and the isles of the ocean. The deities of these nations,—and I might also include those of the most civilized heathen of antiquity,—were they to become incarnate in a Christian land, would be speedily found in the State prison, or on the gallows. And yet those horrid characters have most lavishly received that honor which belongs to Jehovah alone.

But my space will not permit me to speak longer of the four or five hundred millions of degraded pagans who are scattered over the earth. Language cannot describe their degradation,—words are too feeble to portray their wretchedness. Infidel philosophy, in contemplating this lamentable scene, has sometimes contended that men could not all have sprung from the same parentage, so great is the diversity of the human race, in this respect. Some have gone still farther, and maintained, with Lord Monboddo, that

after all, man is but an educated ourang-outang, differing from the monkeys of Borneo only in the degree of his mental cultivation, and his progressive physical improvement! But reason, science and revelation alike condemn all these infidel speculations. The Bible solves the mystery, and tells us why it is that a part of the human race are sunk so deep in degradation and darkness. It is because they know not God. Like that ancient idolater, Pharaoh, they say, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice? . . I know not the Lord." Ex. 5: 2. It is the direct tendency of sin to reduce men to this condition; and therefore we need not wonder at the result. Are we not right, then, in saying that "sin is degrading and brutalizing?"

CHAPTER XI.

SIN THE PARENT OF ALL PHYSICAL EVIL.

Adam a stranger to physical evils—The change wrought by sin—Enumeration of some of these evils—This earth not a suitable place for sinless beings—Severe toil—Indolence—Lack of the comforts of life—Testimony of a traveler—The savage Indian—Disease—Pain—Exposure to accidents—A caution.

We are now to contemplate the influence of sin upon the *bodies* of men. We have already seen that Adam was holy and happy when created. He was, of course, free from all bodily infirmities. He knew no pain, no sickness, no unsatisfied want, till after his fall. Every object in nature gratified his taste, awakened his delight, and administered to his happiness. His physical enjoyment, therefore, was far beyond any thing the most favored of us have ever experienced.

But how different is the condition of man at the present day! Turn which way we

will, we find the declaration of the ancient verified,—"Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Job 5: 6, 7. This is another of the consequences of sin; and we are again reminded by it that guilt and suffering must be for ever connected together. "Can a man take fire into his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?" Prov. 6: 27, 28. No more can an intelligent creature transgress the laws of God, and not suffer in consequence.

Let us now look at some of the different *physical* evils which man suffers.

According to the fancy of the poet who sang of Paradise Lost, when Eve tasted the forbidden fruit,

> "Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat
> Sighing, through all her works gave signs of wo,
> That all was lost."

The earth, doubtless, underwent a great change after the fall. Not only was the

ground cursed, and doomed to bring forth thorns and thistles, but I think there is reason to suppose that other disastrous physical effects followed, introducing jars and discord where all was once harmony and peace. The beasts of the earth, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, are now leagued against man and against each other, and many of them are fired with an inveterate and fierce antipathy, which knows no restraint. In almost every part of the earth, man is exposed, every year, to the burning sun of the tropics, or the freezing and desolating cold of the poles. Many are made sick, and some die, from both these causes. Even the air we breathe,—one of the best of Heaven's blessings,—is sometimes loaded with deadly pestilential poison. All nature thus testifies to man's fallen state.

We have another testimony to the truth of our position, in the fact that God does not consider this world a suitable residence for holy beings, but intends to destroy or renovate it, after the reign of sin is over. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by

the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pe. 3: 7. After this, God is to provide "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,"—a world unstained by sin, and upon which no curse has ever fallen. This will be a fit habitation for holy beings.

Severe toil is another of the physical evils brought upon us in consequence of sin. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," was a part of the curse pronounced upon Adam. But my readers must not suppose that labor itself, when kept within proper limits, is an evil. God gave work to our first parents, while they were yet holy. They were placed in Eden "to dress it and to keep it." Indeed, we know that no rational creature can long be idle and happy. But when a man is compelled to labor twelve, fourteen or sixteen hours a day,—to exhaust his strength to the utmost for a bare subsistence, to the entire neglect of his soul,—he is truly placed under a heavy curse. His bodily system is soon exhausted, his mental powers

are blunted, and buried up in insensibility and grossness of feeling and perception. This is the unhappy condition of millions of our race, and has been from the earliest ages.

There are other millions still, who suffer little less from a very different cause. I refer to those, who, finding themselves possessed of all they need, spend their days without toil or bodily exercise. As a consequence, they are afflicted with indigestion, disturbed sleep, bodily and mental debility, and at length, confirmed bad health, and death. True, both of these evils may, in a great degree, be removed at some future day. "It has been estimated," says Dr. Franklin, "by some political arithmetician, that if every man and woman would work for four hours each day, on something useful, that labor would be sufficient to procure all the necessaries and comforts of life." But man must be made better than he is now, before such a change as this can be accomplished.

The want of the comforts of life is another cause of a vast amount of suffering. When the prodigal wandered from his father's house,

he wasted his substance, and was soon left in most abject poverty. Then "there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." He engaged in an occupation which, to a Jew, must have appeared most degrading; and even then, he well nigh perished with hunger, so that he desired to eat the miserable husks which he gave to the swine. So has it ever been in this world, since Adam's apostasy. When sin came, it brought with it barrenness, and drought, and famines, and consequently poverty, and want and even starvation.

Said a recent traveler, who had just returned from an extensive tour through some of the fairest and most lovely portions of earth,—"I never before had so deep and vivid impressions of the evils of sin. Often when viewing the aspect of nature around me,—all so rich, so charming, and so capable of yielding every product of earth,—I have seemed to myself in the midst of paradise, and could hardly think it possible that the people could be otherwise than happy. But on turning to view the moral and social

aspect of things, I have again and again been overwhelmed by the dark and gloomy contrast. The people are poor, ignorant, degraded and miserable, beyond what I had before supposed possible. Family and domestic comforts are unknown; children ragged, dirty, neglected; houses and villages in ruins; plains and valleys of exuberant fertility are lying waste and barren. Crowds of beggars are thronging on every side, and degradation and misery are every where visible. In a rich and fertile region beyond the Jordan, four hundred and sixty-six villages have been found in ruins; and no where, as I passed from Mount Lebanon, through Galilee and Samaria, to Jerusalem, did I witness one single mark of progress or improvement in any thing; but every where the most affecting signs of decay and hastening ruin. And this," he adds, "is all the result of sin."

But this is not the worst condition to which sin has reduced mankind. The naked and savage Indian is a still more degraded being, as respects his physical condition. His long

hair, uncombed, streams in the wind behind him. His skin, exposed to wind and rain, to the sun's fierce heat, and to the chills of winter, seems almost as hard as leather. Living in a miserable hut, and upon unwholesome food, and often, from the precariousness of the chase, half-starved, he is wan and skeleton-like, and his sharp eye gleams with the fires of passion without intellect. He is a degraded and miserable being, till the glad tidings of salvation reach his ear, and the missionary lifts him from his moral and physical ruin.

Disease is another of the physical evils introduced by sin into this world. As observed at the commencement of this book, it is frequently caused directly by violating some natural law. Still, sin is the *first* cause; for it leads us to break all kinds of law. If man had remained holy, he would not have sinned against his body. But now, almost from the first breath he draws, he begins to suffer from this cause.

> "Each season has its own disease,
> Its peril every hour."

As the child becomes a man, he finds an almost innumerable number of diseases and infirmities crowding upon his path, and laying upon the sick-bed one and another of his companions. A day or two since, we saw a youth, upon whose cheek flushed the smile of health, and whose heart was as light and happy as the gay summer bird. His step was elastic, his arm was full of strength, and his eye kindled with joy. Where is he to-day? We call at his home, and in the quiet and darkened chamber we behold him,—but O, how changed! A raging disease courses through his blood, his cheek is pale, his eye is glassy and motionless, his tongue seems to have forgotten its office, his arm falls palsied upon the bed, and perhaps his mind wanders in wild and painful delirium. Thus, almost in a moment, can disease subdue the strength, and beauty, and health of youth.

The pain which generally accompanies disease, renders it a still more grievous evil. It is surprising what intense suffering the body of man is capable of enduring, when, shattered by disease, each nerve seems to be

laid bare, and each pore of the skin becomes an avenue of exquisite pain. Such as this was the suffering of Dr. Payson, a short time before his death, when it seemed to him as though streams of molten lead were rushing through his bones.

The accidents to which we are exposed, form another part of our physical evils. Our bodies are "crushed before the moth." We are exposed to casualties on every side; and whichever way we turn, we know not that we shall escape them. In the house and by the wayside, on board the vessel and in the rail-car, awake and asleep, we cannot avoid the exposure, nor foresee the accidents which may occur. I need not say that this was not the lot of Adam in his original state. He knew no danger but that one against which God had warned him; and he had nothing else to fear.

Before closing this chapter, I would guard the reader against one error. Let no one suppose, from what has been said, that we can judge of a person's sins by the amount of bodily suffering he endures. God does not

mete out strict justice in this life. Though he causes the first fruits of sin to be reaped here, yet the full harvest is reserved till after death. *Then* we shall all reap what we have sown, and the full measure, too, which belongs to each one of us. It will then appear that many who have passed through the greatest trials here, and received little else but sorrow and tribulation, were the purest spirits of their time, and the most loved of God.

CHAPTER XII.

SIN OFTEN FOLLOWED BY SPECIAL JUDGMENTS.

Another effect of sin—Scripture proofs—Scripture illustrations, national and individual—Pagan history—Nero—The great robber—A speedy judgment—Eugene Aram—A slow retribution—Recollections of an execution—Awful end of an infidel—No sinner exempt from danger—The application brought home.

We come now to another illustration and proof of that remark of Solomon, "Evil pursueth sinners." Prov. 13: 21. We shall see that justice and wrath often overtake the wicked in this life, in the form of afflictions, judgments, or calamities. God is omniscient, and he knows the full extent of their guilt. He is a righteous Judge, and often causes the guilty to be overwhelmed in trouble and destruction.

The following texts of Scripture, selected from a great number, form the foundation of what I shall say, on this subject. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the

counsel of the froward is carried headlong." Job 5: 13. "But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge." Job 36: 12. "There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin." Ps. 38: 3. "Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted." Ps. 107: 17. "And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways; and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations." Ezek. 7: 4. "Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke." Hosea 5: 9. "Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins." Micah 6: 13.

The Bible is full of illustrations of these passages, in respect both to classes of men, and to individuals. It tells us of a whole world, with the exception of one family, overwhelmed with a terrible flood, on account of sin; of the destruction of the rich and

populous cities of the plain, from the same cause; of the most powerful nation then on earth, writhing under a series of judgments, which finally spread consternation over the whole land; of another nation, brought almost within sight of the goodly land of their inheritance, and then, for their rebellion, compelled to turn back into the wilderness, to encounter its perils and privations for forty years, and there at last to lay their bones; and, finally, it tells us of the droughts, the famines, the blastings, the mildews, the pestilences, and the unsuccessful wars, which came upon the same people at a later time, in consequence of their sin.

The Bible also contains many examples of the punishment of *individuals* for their sins. It was a saying of Flavel, "God hangs up some eminent sinners in chains, as a spectacle and warning to others." Such was Haman, who lost his life on the gallows he had erected for the pious Jew. Such was the haughty Nebuchadnezzar, who was suddenly humbled by a most wonderful visitation of God's hand, being thrown into a state of madness or idiocy,

in which he remained for seven years,—the companion of the beasts of the field. Such were Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Ghost, and were struck dead. And such was the proud and impious Herod, who was smitten by the angel of God, and eaten of worms, while he sat on his throne, arrayed in royal apparel, and revered by the people as a god. These are striking illustrations of that Scripture anathema, "Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Is. 3: 11.

In the histories of the ancient heathen nations, we see this same truth illustrated in a variety of instances. Indeed, when we read of those who have stained their lives with vice, and cruelty, and wickedness, we always expect to see some fearful judgment overtake them, before they leave the world. The fate of Nero,—that murderous tyrant, who sported with the misery of his subjects, and whose life was one continued series of horrid crimes,—is perhaps the most striking instance on record of extreme vengeance overtaking extreme guilt. As he had exhausted the utmost pos-

sibilities of crime, so he himself was compelled to drink of the cup of suffering to the last drop his nature could sustain. He beheld his empire wrested from him, and to escape a still more dreadful death, he was compelled, after intense suffering of mind, to stab himself. After death, an expression of horror was impressed upon his stiffening features, which deeply affected every beholder.

I have before me several striking cases of retributive justice, which have occurred in more modern times, and select four, illustrating two important truths,—that sin is sometimes followed by immediate retribution, and that justice, though long delayed, never fails ultimately to expose crime.

About the year 1500, a man by the name of Stammato formed the project of robbing the famous treasury of St. Mark, belonging to the republic of Venice, which was then at the pinnacle of her greatness. He entered the cathedral by false keys, and after long and patient toil, continued through several nights, he at length beheld the almost countless treasures of the wealthiest state in the Chris-

tian world spread before him. Stammato succeeded in carrying away an immense booty, consisting of precious metals, and jewels, and rare articles, to the value of two million of golden ducats; and, what is most strange, the robbery was not discovered. He might now have easily left Venice, and enjoyed his vast wealth in some other land, so far as conscience would permit. But, as is frequently the case, the sudden possession of great wealth appears to have destroyed all powers of judgment; and the man who had baffled Venitian vigilance, was utterly unable to refrain from communicating to some other person the secret of his success! Exacting a solemn oath of secrecy, he disclosed the whole transaction to one of his countrymen, named Grioni, and took him to the place where he had deposited the treasure. An expression which flitted over the face of Grioni, caused Stammato to think that he had bestowed his confidence unwisely, and he was about to stab him to the heart, and thus add a still worse crime to his guilt, when the former excused himself by saying that the sight of so much

wealth had struck him with the most overpowering feelings. Stammato then presented him with a valuable carbuncle, with which, having got rid of the donor's company, he hastened to the ducal palace, and made known to the government the extraordinary depredations which had been committed upon the public property. The robber was immediately arrested, and shortly after was hung, the rope with which he was executed having been previously gilt, that he might exhibit in his death a memorial of the passion which had seduced him to destruction. Thus, before he had an opportunity to enjoy any of the fruits of his success in wickedness, a terrible judgment overtook him, and in a moment he found himself a ruined man.

But the judgments of God are not always so speedy in overtaking the sinner. Years sometimes roll away, and every thing goes on prosperously, between the commission of sin, and the blow of justice. In the year 1745, a most atrocious murder was committed in England by a schoolmaster named Eugene Aram. The murdered victim, who had recently come

in possession of considerable property, was missed by his neighbors, but it was supposed he had gone abroad; while Aram, with his accomplice, retired unsuspected to a distant part of the kingdom, to enjoy their ill-gotten wealth. Thirteen years passed on, and the sudden disappearance of the murdered man was forgotten by those who formerly knew him. But God had not forgotten it, nor did he intend that the murderer should go unpunished, even in this world. By a singular train of providential events, the bones of the murdered man were at length discovered, where they had been buried; and the skull was found to be fractured by a blow, thus putting it beyond doubt that he had been murdered. The accomplice of Aram being suspected, he was arrested, betrayed his guilt, and confessed that he saw Aram murder the man. The latter was immediately arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. Just before the sentence was to be executed, he attempted to take his life by his own hands; but, while yet alive, he was discovered, and suffered the penalty of the law, August 6, 1759, and was

afterwards hung in chains in Knaresborough forest.

In my childhood, I witnessed the execution of one who suffered for a similar crime. He had been concerned with others in the murder of a respectable and wealthy citizen, whose blood they shed in his own house, at midnight. But a terrible retribution awaited them. God's never-sleeping eye looked down when that death-blow was struck; he marked the murderers; and though their crime was committed in the secrecy of darkness, unseen by mortal eye, he quickly brought it to light. I shall never forget the impression made upon my mind, as I saw one of the murderers walk from his cell to the gallows. He was in the vigor of youth and health, and belonged to a respectable family; and had he but chosen virtue instead of vice, innocence instead of guilt, and *friends* instead of *companions*,* he might have occupied a high station in society. But he chose the path of sin, and his sun, at midday, was extinguished in fearful clouds.

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* "Only wise and good men can be *friends;* others are but *companions.*"

I cannot refrain from adding one other illustration, which occurred since the foregoing pages were written, and which utters a warning too solemn to be soon forgotten. It is contained in the following paragraph, taken from one of our religious papers, and the fact is well authenticated.

"SWIFT RETRIBUTION.—On Friday evening, 19th ult., on board the packet-boat Onondaga, a man died in a very sudden and awful manner. He had taken the liberty to avow himself an infidel, and to pour the most horrid anathemas upon Christianity and its Author, and was exceedingly enraged against any that dared to reprove him. While engaged in this wickedness, and while in the very act of cursing the followers of Christ, he fell upon the deck of the boat, and instantly expired. All present, says the individual who gave us the facts in the case, were admonished of the truth of that declaration, 'God is not mocked.' He made himself signal in showing his hatred of God, and was himself suddenly made an exhibition of his power. Let every reader beware how he tempts the Almighty."

"But these," you say, "were all great sinners; and no wonder that they were overtaken by terrible judgments. Surely *I* shall never be guilty of crimes that would call down upon my head such a fearful retribution." True, all these were guilty of great crimes; and you, perhaps, have been guilty only of those sins which are common to youth. But, reader, there is a passage in the Bible which seems to have been put there expressly for such as you. I will repeat it. "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus, answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13: 1–5. My friend, unless that heart of yours is purified by the blood of Christ,

you have no security that it will not yet lead you into vices which now are a loathing to you, and crimes, the mention of which chills your blood with horror.

But think again. Perhaps you have committed sins already, which in some other cases have been punished with heavy judgments. Did you never tell a lie? Gehazi was struck with leprosy, which cleaved to him through life, for telling a lie. Did you never seek to confirm a falsehood by that common imprecation, "I hope to die if it is not so?" I have heard of such self-imprecations before; and I have also heard of their being followed by instant death. In the town of Devizes, in England, there is a monument erected to commemorate an event of this kind, and to stand as a warning to all who behold it; and a similar instance is said to have occurred in Pennsylvania, but a short time since. Were you never guilty of breaking the Sabbath? Not long ago, nearly the whole of one of the most beautiful and prosperous villages in this State was laid in ashes, and nearly two hundred families turned from their homes, because

a few men and boys, instead of remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy, spent it in amusement and labor. Did you never steal? Our jails and prisons are full of those who have been overtaken in the same crime. Did you never mock and insult old age? I need not remind you of the fate of those forty-two children, whose cry was, "Go up, thou bald head." I presume you have been guilty of most of these sins; do not suppose, then, that you are in no danger of God's judgments. It was discovered, a great many ages ago, that "they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same;" and though the seed may be comparatively small, the harvest will be abundant.

You know not, my reader, what retributions God may bring upon you, even in this world, if you longer remain in sin. Although it is not an *invariable* rule that the wicked are visited in judgment here, yet it is so common a one, that there is always reason to fear it. The Lord may frustrate your plans, blight your hopes, and remove the dearest objects of your affection. He can do all this,

and much more. It is thus that he has ever dealt with his enemies. This world has been justly termed a vast sepulchre. It is indeed a tomb, not merely of the mortal part of man, but of his hopes, his honors, his pleasures and his wealth. God will not let the sinner alone, and if you determine to transgress his laws, abuse his love, and reject his offers of mercy, you must expect to feel the weight of his wrath.

CHAPTER XIII.

SIN THE PARENT OF DEATH.

Visit to a death-bed—Sin the cause of death—An inquiry disposed of—Brevity of life—Various forms of disease—Accidents—Death always near—An unpleasant truth—Universal fear of death—Sin the sting of death—Experience of Voltaire, Gibbon and Newport—The sinner loses all at death—Queen Elizabeth, Adrian and Beaufort—A scene at the excavation of Pompeii—Another visit to the death-bed—A message from God—Preparation for death—Illustrations of the infatuation and ignorance of man—The sinner's only hope.

Come with me, reader, to the bed of death. An immortal soul is just struggling to leave its prison-house; a frail body is yielding up its brief existence. The steps of the last enemy are approaching, and every new symptom of dissolution strikes terror into the spectators, and spreads gloom through the silent dwelling. How anxiously does the dying man watch the countenances of his friends, as they stand by his side, observing the rapid progress of death! His physician reluctantly informs him that he

can do no more for him; and the last lingering hope is given up. His senses now begin to fail, and his intellect is at times deranged. The eye grows dim, the voice becomes almost extinct, and the limbs and trunk are motionless. Now, in the language of another, "his friends, his relatives, his children, crowd around his body, shed their unavailing tears over him, and receive his last blessing. His pulse beats a surrender to the pale conqueror; his eyes swim; his tongue falters; a cold sweat bedews his face; he groans; he expires!"

Such is death,—such the doom passed upon all mankind. As we turn away from the mournful scene, let us not try to banish the solemn impressions it naturally makes on our hearts; but rather let us ask, Why is it that this awful doom is passed upon man? Why must *I* pass through this painful, this agonizing scene, and suffer my soul and body to be riven asunder,—the one to appear before its Creator, the other to be given to corruption? The answer to this question you will find in the word of God. "*Sin*, when it is finished, *bringeth forth death.*" James 1:

15. What emphatic language! Sin is the *parent* of death; and hence the indissoluble connection between the two. By another Scripture figure, death is represented as the *wages* of sin. As a remuneration to the sinner for the services he renders to Satan, he receives in the end death, temporal as well as spiritual. "For the wages of sin is death." Rom. 6: 23. Well did the wise man say, "He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death." Prov. 11: 19.

Perhaps some inquisitive reader is ready to ask, "What, would Adam have remained on the earth to the present time, if he had not sinned?" This is a question which it is not needful for us to answer. I would simply say, God might have removed him to the heavenly world in some such manner as he did Enoch and Elijah; or, if he was to leave his tabernacle of clay behind, the fears and terrors now associated with the transition process might have been unknown. Be this as it may, we know that sin has brought death into the world, and that "death passed upon all, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5: 12.

We no sooner begin to live than we begin to die. "The longest life is but a lingering death." In the language of Holy Writ, "Our days upon earth are a shadow." Job 8: 9. They are "swifter than a weaver's shuttle." Job 7: 6. "They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." Job 9: 26. "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away," so do we disappear. Job 7: 9. We are as "the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away; as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney." Hos. 13: 3. Every thing that is fleeting and transitory, every thing that is frail and helpless, is used as an emblem of man's life.

"I have seen the morning vapor
Scattered by the eye of day;
I have seen the evening taper
Shine, and glimmer, and decay;
And bethought me, as I stood,
These are man's similitude."

The measure of our life is a hand-breadth; it is a tale that is told; its rapidity is like the

swift shuttle or the flying arrow; it is brief as the fading flower, or the transitory rainbow, or the dazzling meteor; it is a bubble; it is a breath. At every swing of the pendulum, a spirit goes into eternity. Between the rising and the setting of every sun, 43,000 souls are summoned before their Creator. Death is ever busy, night and day, at all seasons, and in all climes. True, as well as beautiful, are those lines of Mrs. Hemans,—

"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north-wind's breath,
And stars to set,—but all,
Thou hast *all* seasons for thy own, O death!"

He is supplied with a boundless variety of darts and arrows, with which he accomplishes his work. Could all the forms in which death comes to man be written together, what a long and fearful catalogue would it make! Think of the innumerable number of diseases, all at the command of death. And, as though these were not sufficient, see how man is exposed to fatal accidents on every hand, and at every moment. It was a saying of Flavel,

that "the smallest pore in the body is a door large enough to let in death." "The least gnat in the air," says the same writer, "may choke one, as it did Adrian, a pope of Rome. A little hair in milk may strangle one, as it did a counsellor in Rome. A little skin of a raisin may stop one's breath, as it did the lyric poet, Anacreon." A little "hang-nail" on a finger recently proved the avenue of death to a physician of this city, who was in the vigor of life and health. Even the food we eat to nourish us, and the air we breathe, may introduce death into our systems. And though every thing else should fail to harm us, we might fall beneath our own hands, should God permit a cloud to pass over our reason. O, how insecure is life! how near is death! What has been said of the mariner in respect to his ship, that "he always sails within four inches of death," may be said of the soul, in relation to the body. If the ship split, then the sailor sinks; if our earthen vessel break, the soul is plunged for ever into the shoreless ocean of eternity. Were our senses not benumbed and deadened, we should be con-

stantly reminded of this danger. We should read a warning in every sere leaf, and hear an admonition in every wind that sighs. Even sleep, "nature's sweet restorer," would be as a nightly monitor of death,—an ever-present emblem of mortality.

These are truths familiar to all men; but they are generally unpleasant ones. There is constantly going on a warfare against them. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." Job 2: 4. The world are busy in erecting barriers against the encroachments of death. Though but few of them, like certain Chinese philosophers, expect to discover an elixir which shall make them immortal, yet nearly all wish to postpone the evil day as long as possible. Death does not seem to them like a "sleeping child" or "beautiful youth," as the ancient Grecians painted him, but rather like a frightful skeleton, arrayed in terrors. They cannot endure the thought, that while they are full of anticipations of coming years, the shaft of the insatiate archer may be even now quivering on its string, and already aimed at the shining mark. It is said of one who

was eminently successful in obtaining wealth, influence and honor, that when he reached the climax of his glory, being asked if there were any thing wanting to complete his happiness, he replied, "I am soon to die." This was the fatal worm at the root of his happiness. This thought dashed to the earth his brightest hopes.

Even royalty cannot protect itself against the fear of death. Louis XI, of France, was so fearful of death, that so often as it came into his physician's head to threaten him with it, he put money into his hands to pacify him; and in this way his physician amassed a large fortune in a few months. Another king of France absolutely forbid an allusion to death in his presence. Catherine, late empress of Russia, made it a penal offence for a funeral procession to pass her palace, and commanded that the dead should be buried in the night. Truly, death is terrible to the unprepared.

"The sting of death is sin." 1 Cor. 15: 56. Yes, death has a sting, and this is the reason why men fear it so. Only let this be removed,—and there is One who can pluck

it out,—and death loses nearly all its terrors. The Christian can breathe his soul out as calmly as though he were sinking into a peaceful sleep. But not so with the sinner. He dreads and fears the hour. It is not merely that he must part with friends whom he loves; neither is it the pains of dissolution. Men who have sundered all the ties of friendship, generally have the same fear of death that other men have. And as to the *pains* of death, there is reason to suppose that in many cases the bodily suffering endured by the dying man is but slight; and frequently death does its work without producing any pain at all.

It is sin, then, that makes death terrible. It was sin, and nothing else, that made Voltaire, the celebrated infidel, look back in his last moments upon his past life with remorse, and forward with dismay. It was sin that made him wish for annihilation. It was sin that caused Gibbon, another famous infidel, to leave this world in a state of gloomy despondency, destitute of all hope and consolation. It was sin that extorted that awful wish from Sir Francis Newport, when dying,—

"O, that I were to lie and broil upon that fire for a hundred thousand years, to purchase the favor of God, and be reconciled to him again! But it is a fruitless, vain wish; millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my tortures than one poor hour." It was sin that forced from him that dreadful and almost unearthly groan, when he exclaimed, just before his departure, "Oh, the insufferable pangs of death and damnation!"

There is another consideration which we must not forget. Death not only summons the sinner to the presence of his offended Maker, but it robs him for ever of those things which he called his own on earth, and which he madly endeavored to make his gods.

"The countless treasures of his care,
Hamlets and villas green and fair,
His mighty power,—
What were they all but grief and shame,
Fears and a broken heart, when came
The parting hour!"

Elizabeth, queen of England, with every thing in her power that heart could wish,—except one thing,—exclaimed, on her dying bed,—

"Millions of money for an inch of time!" Miserable woman! she had wasted seventy years in her ambitious pursuits; and now, though she could command the wealth of a vast realm, she was too poor to purchase even an inch of time, to devote to preparation for another world. She must part with all her riches, and go, poor and unpardoned, into the presence of her Judge. So fared it with Adrian. "Oh, my poor wandering soul!" he cried, "alas! whither art thou going? Where must thou lodge this night? Thou shalt never jest more, never be merry more!" And thus was it, too, with Cardinal Beaufort, who was extremely rich, and who cried out upon his death-bed, "Will not death be hired? Will money do nothing? Must I die, that have such great riches? If the whole realm of England would save my life, I am able, either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it."

That was an instructive scene, witnessed at the excavation of the city of Pompeii,*

* I would remark, for the information of my younger readers, that Pompeii was an opulent and splendid city, suddenly destroyed by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, in the year 79. The ruins were not discovered till the year 1713.

when the workmen discovered, in a spacious cellar, beneath one of the dwellings, the skeleton of the master of the house, his hands grasping coins and jewels and his coffer keys, and a slave behind him with bronze and silver vases. A skeleton grasping the glittering trifles of this life! What a comment upon the weakness of man, and the vanity of this world's riches! O, what are these things to the dying man, about to render up his final account!

Youthful reader, come with me again to the bed of death. Shrink not from the sight,—it is one that we may often witness with profit to our souls. Come, and hear a sermon more solemn and pointed than ever fell from human lips. Come, listen to an appeal which the hardest heart cannot wholly withstand. God speaks, amid falling tears, and aching hearts, and departing life. What does he say? Ah, he reminds you of that truth which I have endeavored to impress upon your hearts,—*man is a sinner.* And is this all? No, there is a voice still more loud and earnest, crying in your ears, *Prepare to die.* Yes, you too

must die. No matter how perfect your health, or how ardent your hopes,—each one of you has already set out on the highway of death;

> "And your hearts, though stout and brave,
> Still, like muffled drums, are beating
> Funeral marches to the grave."

And how will you prepare to meet your Maker? Pause, and consider this question.

Many are the ways in which men seek to prepare themselves for death. Some have sought a preparation that would enable them to meet the common foe with a dignity suitable to their station. Thus, a Roman emperor, having been told by certain priests that he would commit suicide, furnished himself with ropes of gold and purple, and golden swords, and poisons enclosed in jewels, that he might die with imperial dignity. But, poor man, after all his solicitude, he was murdered, and his body was dragged through the common sewers by ropes that had neither purple nor gold in their base composition. Others have sought to meet death with good grace and taste. Such was the preparation of the ancient

gladiators, who studied how to die in graceful postures, and who thickened their blood by a peculiar diet, that it might flow slowly from their wounds, and prolong their agonies, for the gratification of the barbarous spectators. Some have looked to an earthly fame, to enable them to die in peace. Such was the miserable preparation of Buffon, who said, when speaking of the respect Europe had paid to his talents, "I am not afraid of death, and am consoled by the thought that my name will never die." Poor comfort, indeed, he afterwards found this; for when some verses on the immortality of the soul were read in his presence, he smiled, and acknowledged that "religion would be a valuable gift if this were true." Others have endeavored to prepare themselves for the great change by administering to their souls, in their last moments, some soothing balsam of Satan, or quieting opiate of error. So did Voltaire, who unburdened his mind by confessing to a priest, and who earnestly desired his physician to procure for him a treatise against the eternity of future punishment. Others cultivate,

as their preparation, an utter contempt of death,—a brutal thoughtlessness of their eternal destiny. This was recently illustrated by a notorious English gambler, who is said to have exhibited, in his dying moments, "a frightful anxiety as to the result of certain races then taking place!" The Roman Catholics, too,—needing something, as a substitute for true religion, to enable them to meet death calmly,—have invented a peculiar preparative, in the form of a "sacrament," called "extreme unction," which, they say, "gives grace to die well." The same end is sought in Mohammedan countries by long pilgrimages, and painful fastings, and oft-repeated but heartless prayers; and in heathen lands, by cruel tortures, and bloody altars, and idle ceremonies.

Such are a few of the ways in which infatuated, ignorant and unhappy man has sought to prepare himself for death. What an illustration do they present of the dreadful ruin sin has brought upon the race! How melancholy the spectacle, to see immortal souls rushing into death like a beast to the

slaughter, wholly regardless of the future, or else building their hopes for eternity upon a mere shadow, which may vanish from their view even before their eyes are sealed in death. But there *is* a preparation for death which is adequate to support and comfort the soul in its last moments. There *is* a foundation,—a well tried corner-stone,—upon which if a man build, not death or hell shall be able to move him. Reader, may that firm foundation and that unfailing preparation be yours! May you die the death of the righteous, and may your last end be like his!

CHAPTER XIV.

SIN PUNISHED AFTER DEATH.

Death not the end of sin—Doctrine of universal salvation—Only those who believe will be saved—The second death—The judgment—Its retributions eternal—What the Bible says about it—The character of God requires the punishment of the finally impenitent—A universal sentiment in the human breast—Nature of the sinner's punishment—Bodily suffering—Mistake of the heathen—Mental or spiritual suffering—Remorse and despair—Tormenting reflections—Scripture emblems of hell—No escape from this punishment—Prayer of a lost spirit—A reflection on the awful end of sin.

We have glanced at some of the principal evils which sin brings with it in the present life. We have seen that it is an evil and bitter thing,—that its effects are blighting, withering, deadening, and terribly destructive, in the end bringing forth death. But shall we stop here? Has sin finished its work, when the body is deposited in the grave? Some answer, yes; but such, we believe, have fallen into a great and lamentable error.

They suppose that the impenitent sinner receives all his punishment in this world, and that hereafter he will be delivered, in some way or other, both from sin and suffering. But is this true? It is not taught in the Bible; and if reason ever teaches it, it is a reason like that of the little child, who believes that the mountains which bound the prospect from his father's dwelling, are the limits of the globe, and the little rill that runs through the valley, the river which waters all the nations of the earth. Those who believe this doctrine, must take a narrow view of the subject. Is the remorse of conscience, the fear, the shame, the anxiety, which torment a man detected in crime, the penalty of the violated law? When he stands at the bar of justice, does he plead how much he has suffered from these causes, as a reason why he should not be sentenced? No more can the sinner prove that these incidental evils are the full penalty of the law. It must not be forgotten that this life is a state of probation, not of retribution.

But perhaps some think death is the end of sin, because Christ came to save the lost, and

died to deliver us from endless wo. True, he has done all this; but even this will not save a single soul, till something more is done. If a king should promise full pardon to a band of rebels, on condition that they lay down their arms, and submit to his government, this offer would not save their necks from justice, unless the terms were complied with. Nay, if the king were firm and consistent, it would seal their doom, should they fall into his hands in war. So the sinner has terms to comply with. He must believe now, if he would be saved hereafter. God has threatened him with evil, only evil, and evil continually, so long as he continues in sin. He has never told him that death will be the end of his sorrows. Jesus Christ has never promised to save a soul that does not believe on him. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16: 16. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 8: 36. "He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3: 12.

This is all the language of our Saviour; and it is too plain to be misunderstood.

There is, then, a second and far more terrible death awaiting the impenitent. Sin is a disease which, unless healed by the blood of Christ, kills the soul as well as the body. When a certain Italian,—thrusting his dagger into the heart of an enemy whom he had just persuaded to renounce the Saviour of the world,—boasted that he had a sweet revenge, as he had destroyed, at one stroke, both soul and body, he did only what Satan does with multitudes. If he can but persuade a sinner to reject Christ till the moment of death, he is satisfied; for then the same shaft consigns to death both soul and body.

We are taught in the Bible that a day is appointed, in which God will judge the world in righteousness. Although there is probably a particular and individual judgment passed upon each person at death, yet God has determined that there shall be a general judgment, at which all mankind shall appear, and receive each his appropriate sentence; thus vindicating the divine justice before the as-

sembled universe. There will then be no escape from justice. The impenitent sinner, who may have possibly escaped many of the incidental consequences of sin in this life, will now be brought to a stand in his career. As he looks around upon that vast collection of immortal beings, he cannot find one that loves him or cares for him. His associates in guilt are too much absorbed in their own sorrow to sympathize with him; and the righteous cannot do it. He is self-condemned. Should he attempt to justify himself, his own mouth would condemn him, and his words prove him perverse. Nor can he find a false witness to testify in his favor, or a single flaw in the law through which to escape. "The heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him." Job 20: 27. Horror and despair gather upon his countenance, as he takes his place at the left hand, and hears that fearful sentence fall from the lips of Him whom he rejected and condemned on earth,—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25: 41.

After the solemn retributions of the judgment, the eternal state of all mankind will be for ever fixed. The righteous, or those who have repented of their sins in this world, will enter upon the joys of heaven, and be eternally happy. The wicked, or those who do not truly repent in this life, will be cast into "the lake of fire," and be eternally miserable. These are not shut out of heaven, and then annihilated, though even this would be a great punishment; but they are doomed to live in utter despair, experiencing the torments of a guilty conscience, and the wrath of an offended God.

Many people deny the truth of this doctrine; and as we have several good reasons for believing it, we will look at some of them for a moment.

1. The Bible teaches it, in such passages as the following. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Eze. 18: 4. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. 29: 1. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the

presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thes. 1: 9. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Ps. 9: 17. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." Matt. 7: 13. "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 25: 30. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they shall have no rest day nor night." Rev. 14: 11. "The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." Matt. 13: 49.

These are but a few of the passages in the Bible which teach that the sinner will suffer for his wickedness after death. The opposition made by the wicked to the instructions of Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles,—the anxiety of many for their own salvation, when awakened by the preaching of holy men,—and the great solicitude for the salvation of souls which Christ and his disci-

ples manifested, confirm us in the belief that the doctrine of universal salvation was not taught in Bible times, unless it were by false teachers.

2. The character of God seems to require the future punishment of the wicked. We know that God is just; but we also know that he does not dispense strict justice to men in this world. The wicked sometimes rule, and seem to have their own way, for many generations, while the righteous are trodden under foot. We can account for this only by supposing that a great day of reckoning is to come, when every man shall receive according to his deeds. I would refer my readers to the seventy-third psalm, for proof of this.

3. The universal belief of pagan nations, in every age of the world, though not of itself conclusive, is good collateral evidence of the truth of this doctrine. There seems to have been originally a sentiment implanted in the breast of man, that just retributions await him in the life to come; and this sentiment has been perpetuated and handed down, and become almost a part of man himself.

These are the principal reasons why we believe that the wicked will be punished hereafter. We may now inquire, what is the nature and extent of this punishment? In answering this inquiry, we must turn to the word of God for wisdom, nor venture to go beyond what he has revealed.

Bodily suffering will probably form a part of this punishment. The resurrection bodies of the righteous are particularly spoken of in the Bible; but concerning those of the wicked little is said. As the former will be glorious, and susceptible of the highest happiness, some have supposed the latter will be hideous, and capable of intense suffering. They will rise from their graves to "shame and everlasting contempt." And as the lust of the flesh often tempted the soul to sin, the body will doubtless participate in the punishment. No creature of God,—not even a drop of water,—will be permitted to administer comfort to a sinner after his probation is closed.

But here the heathen have made a great mistake. They have generally supposed the whole punishment of the sinner to be corpo-

real. Their notions of future misery have been set forth in the descriptions they give of one who was fastened to a wheel, and rapidly and continually whirled about; of another, who was set in water up to his chin, with apples hanging to his very lips, yet had no power either to stoop to the one, to quench his raging thirst, or reach the other, to appease his craving appetite; of others, who were condemned in hell to fill a barrel full of holes with water, which ran out again as fast as it was filled; of one who was compelled to roll a great stone up a steep hill, which, when it was just at the top, suddenly fell down again, and so renewed his labor; and of another, upon whose entrails a vulture fed continually, while they grew again as fast as devoured.

These specimens are gathered from the fables of ancient heathen nations; but similar notions often prevail at the present day. The Chinese believe there are ten hells, which are thus described by Dr. Morrison, the missionary: "One is stuck full of knives; another, an iron boiler full of scalding water; another of cold ice; in another, the punishment con-

sists in pulling out the tongue; another is full of poisonous serpents; in another the victim is drawn in pieces; another is a hell of blackness and darkness." The Mohammedans believe in seven hells; and their Koran teaches that he who is punished most lightly will be shod with shoes of fire, the heat of which will cause his skull to boil like a cauldron!

But these are not the teachings of the Bible. The misery of the lost will be principally *mental* or *spiritual.* There is reason to believe that thought is immortal, and can never be banished from the soul. If so, every sinful thought that has passed through the mind in this world, will rise from its grave, and stand before the sinner, to torment him. There will be no river of oblivion, as some of the ancients taught, of which he may drink, and forget the whole of the past. Conscience will inflict upon him torments of which we cannot now conceive. The sinner will abhor himself, and be hated and despised, even by his demoniacal associates. Every faculty of the spirit will be, as it were, a living nerve, exposed to the most exquisite pain, and every

breath a flame of fire. Not only deprived of every thing good, he will suffer every thing that is terrible. Despair will meet him at every hand. Henceforth and for ever his employment will be weeping and wailing, cursing and accusing. His only companions will be devils and the damned; and his portion, hopeless misery. Faint, indeed, are the most vivid conceptions we can form of such an awful state.

Lost spirits will have clear convictions of sin, and will be conscious of the black malignity of their hearts. Those who once lived in Christian lands will recollect the kind admonitions of the people of God, and remember that salvation was once within their reach, and they rejected it. "Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not,"—these words will for ever echo through the caverns of perdition, and thunder in the ears of the lost. They will also be tormented with raging desires that cannot be gratified; with the thought that God, from whose face they are banished, overrules their sin and misery for his own glory and the good of the righteous; and it

may be, to complete their misery, they will have a view of the righteous in glorious felicity. Thus abandoned to sin, their state must be wretched beyond conception. When we recollect that the worst incarnation of Satanic malignity which has ever cursed this world, was not *entirely* abandoned to his sin,—that God did not withdraw every restraining influence even from him,—we can form some feeble idea of the state of those who are utterly given over to work unrighteousness in the prison-house of despair, and who are like "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." Jude 13.

The most terrible and affecting metaphors and types are used in the Bible, to represent the misery of the lost. The ceaseless fires and putrefactions of the valley of Hinnom were thus employed. This valley was situated near Jerusalem, and was the receptacle of all the filth and rubbish of the city, to consume which perpetual fires were kept up. It was a place full of abominations; and to a Jew it was revolting beyond expression. Hence its name, *Gehenna*, or Tophet, was applied to

hell itself. A variety of other metaphors are also used, to represent the sinner's doom. It is called "death," "worm that never dieth," "bottomless pit," "blackness of darkness," "lake of fire and brimstone," "fire that never shall be quenched," "vengeance of eternal fire," "furnace of fire," "fire prepared for the devil and his angels," &c. These are figurative expressions, and must not be understood literally; but yet they are burdened with a fearful meaning. Here we are not permitted to feel the full weight of the evil which sin would naturally work in us. If we sin against the body, mercy is ever ready to ease the pain and heal the wound. If we sin against the soul, mercy whispers forgiveness, and thus consoles the burdened spirit. But not so in the world of wo. There are no cures for the wounds of sin *there*,—no balm for the wounded spirit. Sin will work the full measure of its own misery, and thus verify the expressions quoted above.

And from this dreadful state there can be no escape. Their punishment will be endless, their doom fixed unalterably. The Bible does

not speak of an age of future bliss, or of years of misery ; but its language is,—*eternal life*,—*eternal death*. In this world, prisoners will sometimes counterfeit repentance and reformation, and even religion, that they may be delivered from confinement. But there will be no counterfeiting religion in hell. No door of delivery will ever be opened. There may, perhaps, be petitions and cries for mercy. Indeed, one petition has reached us from the world of wo ; and it is worthy of our notice. It is not addressed to the great Sovereign of the universe, but to a created being ; as though the wretched suppliant dare not lift his voice in prayer to Him whom he had despised and dishonored on earth. Nor did he plead for deliverance from his torture, for salvation, for eternal life. Ah no, these were blessings he dare not even think of. His only request was for a drop of water, to cool for a moment his terrible agony ! Let this be a lesson to us ; and may it produce that effect on our hearts which our Saviour designed.

Let no one think that, in thus dwelling on the misery of the lost, the subject affords any

thing like gratification to the writer, except so far as the triumph of justice and righteousness is concerned. There is no chord in his soul that can respond to these solemn truths but in mournful notes. Indeed, he has written these pages as one who trembles lest he may be recording his own doom. But a deep conviction of the truth of these things has induced him to speak plainly. It is his desire that every one who opens this book may be impressed with the dreadful ruin sin brings upon the soul. And how can this be done better than by holding up for contemplation the awful spectacle of a ruined soul,—its hopes dashed to perdition, its faculties blasted for ever, its affections turned to fiendlike hatred, its powers all employed in blaspheming its Creator, and in tormenting itself and its wretched associates? I ask you to turn from this sad scene, and measure, if you can, the infinite evil of sin. Well may we exclaim, with Bunyan, "Man knows the beginnings of sin, but who can tell the issues thereof!" Verily,

"She weaves the winding sheet of souls, and lays
Them in the urn of everlasting death!"

CHAPTER XV.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESULTS OF SIN.

Recapitulation of the effects of sin—Justice of the punishment—Sin a great evil—Folly of sin—Its deceitfulness—Its blindness—Its madness—Its deadly nature—The sinner wrongs his own soul—Sin destroys happiness—Man not created to be unhappy—No true happiness without God—False pleasures of sin—Melancholy, dejection and ennui—Fifty years' experience of a king—No happiness in heaven for a sinner—Thought for an incredulous youth—Disease long concealed—Vesuvius, before and after its first eruption—Danger often unseen—Sin not a small thing, as some imagine—Great effects from apparently small causes—The eight stages of sin.

THE Bible declares that "the way of transgressors is hard." Prov. 13: 15. In the foregoing chapters we have had abundant illustration of the truth of this text. We have seen that sin not only deprives us of God's approbation, but exposes us to the terrors of his wrath, and the influence of Satan; that it awakens remorse, fear and shame, in the breast of the sinner; that it

sears the conscience, hardens the heart, debases the mind, and degrades the whole man; that it is the author of all bodily suffering, and often brings special judgments upon the sinner; that in the end it brings forth death, after which it will draw down upon the impenitent the full weight of the wrath of God for ever. This is a severe punishment; but is it not just? Who dare say that the penalty exceeds the guilt? The fact that God has thus ordained the penalty of sin, is sufficient proof of its justice. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 18: 25. Who knows better than he what sin is, and what protection it is necessary to station around his holy law? He is the last being that could wish to see a creature unhappy; but he esteems his law of vastly more importance than the happiness of a rebel, or a multitude of rebels. Is not this right? The sinner alone is responsible for the sufferings he endures. He is not compelled to sin by any other being, but every act of transgression is voluntary. The child who disobeys a wholesome rule at

school, and is punished, should not blame the teacher who made the rule, and who enforces it for the good of the whole; he should blame no one but himself for the pain he endures. So with the sinner. Whatever he may think of the Bible, he cannot open his lips when it says, "Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed." Job 4: 8, 9.

There are several important thoughts, suggested by this subject, which claim a separate chapter; and I would now direct the reader's attention to them.

1. If the punishment of sin is such as has been described, then we cannot doubt that sin is a terrible evil. Were it a trivial thing, God would treat it as such. Were it a misfortune to which man is exposed, and which he could not escape, his punishment would be undeserved. But we find nothing in the Bible that relieves the blackness of sin,—nothing that encourages us for a moment to look upon it as a misfortune, to be pitied

rather than condemned. It is condemned every where in the Bible,—unequivocally and sternly condemned. It is every where held up as the great abomination of this world, abhorred by God above every thing else, and the grand cause of all the ills of life. It is nothing less than robbery committed against God! "Will a man rob God?" says Jehovah; "yet ye have robbed me." Mal. 3: 8. It is high treason against Heaven! "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me, saith the Lord." Is. 1: 2. We here see the truth of that remark of Owen, "He that hath slight thoughts of sin, never had great thoughts of God."

2. Sin is great folly. David once had occasion to say, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee." Ps. 69: 5. There was never yet a sinner, with an enlightened conscience, who has not felt the folly of sin. How great was the folly of Adam! and how must he have looked upon it, after he began to experience the bitter fruits of sin, when he contrasted

his unhappy situation with what it was before his sin. He transgressed God's command that he might become wiser; but he became a fool. Nor is their folly much less, who madly persist in the ways of sin, even after they have begun to experience the bitter fruits of such a course. They turn their backs upon heaven, and rush on through the thorny path of sin, amid dangers, and death itself, as though it conducted to glory. They had rather "feed on ashes," in the service of Satan, than fare on heavenly manna and living water, among the people of God. They cheerfully and patiently wind about themselves the cord with which Satan is binding them for a terrible sacrifice. Among the curious sights which Bunyan's pilgrim saw, was an aged man, with his muck-rake, gathering up a few straws, regardless of the crown of glory suspended over his head by angel hands, and which he might have secured, had he raised his eyes from his grovelling and earthly employment. O, the folly of sin! What a miserable bargain do they make, who barter away heaven, and

the favor of God, for a few years of sin and folly! Compared with this, Esau's folly, in parting with his birthright for a dish of pottage, was wisdom itself! See, then, why it is that the Bible so often calls irreligious men *fools*. They *are* fools indeed,—"the laughing-stock of devils."

3. We see the deceitfulness of sin. It makes many fair promises, but fulfils none of them. Says Bishop Reynolds, "There is no real fruit in sin; the promises thereof are all false and deceitful. Gehazi promised himself gain, but got the leprosy. Balaam pursued honor, but met with a sword. Achan found a wedge of gold, but it cleaved asunder his soul from his body. The only fruits of sin are shame if we repent, and death if we do not repent." And yet, evident as this truth is, how few believe it! This leads us to notice,—

4. The blindness of sin. As I have before said, Satan puts out the eyes of his captives, and leads them at will. They do not wish to know the truth. They prefer darkness rather than light, because their deeds are

evil. Thus they crowd on to perdition, and believe it not till they have reached the end of their course.

5. We here see the madness of sin. He who lays violent hands on his body, inflicting painful injuries upon it, is deemed a madman; —why not he who destroys his soul? Is it not the height of madness to pursue a course which leads to such evils as we have recently contemplated? Truly, "madness is in their heart while they live." Eccl. 9: 3. I know not that I ever heard of a more striking case of *real* madness, than that of a sailor who recently died, lamenting with his last breath that he had lost fifteen dollars' worth of pleasure, he being compelled to leave that amount of cash behind him, unspent. Is not voluntary madness like this more to be dreaded than that of the unfortunate lunatic, who, by an inscrutable providence, is deprived for a time of his reason?

6. Behold the deadly nature of sin. The Indians say that an arrow poisoned with the venom of a rattlesnake will carry death with it for ages afterwards. But the venom of sin

is more fatal than this; it carries death with it for ever. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,"—certain, inevitable and eternal death, unless timely repentance arrest the progress of the fatal disease.

7. It is evident that the sinner wrongs his own soul, by adhering to his evil ways. He not only cheats it of that, the want of which

> "Is worse than hunger, poverty and pain,
> And all the transitory ills below,"

but he afflicts it with numerous positive evils. "He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death." Prov. 8: 36. God said to his ancient people, when they departed from him, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." Hos. 13: 9. At a later day, one of the apostles spoke of sinners as those "who oppose themselves." The view that we have taken confirms these declarations.

8. The last and most apparent reflection, and one on which I have much to say, is this,—sin, of necessity, must destroy happiness. A poet once exclaimed,

"Alas, how oft does *goodness* wound itself,
And sweet *affection* prove the spring of wo!"

Yes, this is sometimes true. But if goodness and affection, in this evil world, can make one unhappy, what shall be said of *sin* and *hatred?* O, the pain, the agony, the despair, which these have brought into this world! And yet nothing is plainer than that God did not originally make man to be unhappy. Had this been his object, as Dr. Paley has observed, "he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted, bitter; every thing we saw, loathsome; every thing we touched, a sting; every smell a stench; and every sound a discord."

No, God never created a being to make him unhappy. He so constituted man, that all the faculties of the mind, all the attributes of the soul, and all the powers of the body, unless perverted by sin, might yield him the highest happiness. Who is to blame, then,

if man is called to experience "the gall of bitterness," and to drink of the cup of sorrow? He surely cannot blame his Creator. Sin is the author of this. It has introduced discord, alienation, jealousy and enmity into every nation, and community, and family of man; and wherever these feelings are found, man must be wretched. In vain we strive to be happy without God. We attempt an utter impossibility, and are doomed to certain disappointment, though hope may flicker before us for a while. All God's laws,—the moral law and the laws of the mind,—are against us. God says, "There is no peace to the wicked;" dare you contradict him? True, some sins yield a certain degree of pleasure, and for a time do not seem to be followed by any serious consequences; but their pleasure is a guilty one, and, moreover, it is but momentary. "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. 23: 32. Poisonous substances, generally, are unpleasant to the taste; but one of the most deadly poisons known, prussic acid, has both an agreeable odor and taste.

So those kinds of sin which appear sweet and pleasant to the depraved soul, are only the more dangerous and fatal.

It has been well said, that "sin stings us even in our pleasures; but religion consoles us even in our pains." The first part of this maxim has proved true in the case of every sinner. He may be mirthful and thoughtless, but this will not save him from unhappiness. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Prov. 14: 13. He may be wealthy, but, like Stephen Girard, and many others, he will be at heart a wretched man, for all his treasures. He may be endowed with the talents and possessed of the careless, mirth-loving soul of a Burns; but, like Burns, there will often be moments, if not hours and days, when he will sigh,—

"Oppressed with grief, oppressed with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I sit me down and sigh;
O life, thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I."

He may, in short, taste of every stream of earthly pleasure; but if he does not, like Lord Chesterfield, sooner or later wish himself in the place of the dog that crouches at his feet, he will at least be compelled to turn away in disgust, and confess that the portion of this world cannot make a soul happy. "It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he waketh, and, behold, he is faint." Is. 29: 8. Melancholy, dejection, disgust of life, or, as it is termed, *ennui*, gnaw at the root of many a man's happiness, who, did he enjoy the favor of God, might be a happy Christian. This is true even of those who are favored with many earthly blessings. After the death of one of the kings of Spain, in 961, the following singular memorandum was found among his papers, in the handwriting of the deceased. "Fifty years have passed since I was caliph. I have enjoyed riches, honors and pleasures. Heaven has showered upon me all the gifts that man

could desire. In this long space of apparent felicity, I have kept an account of how many happy days I have passed. Their number is *fourteen.* Consider, then, mortals, what is grandeur, what is the world, and what is life!"

It is evident that the sinner can find but little real, abiding happiness on earth. But we may go farther than this, and affirm that he could find still less in heaven. We know that no one can enjoy that for which he has no relish or taste. An ignorant man would not esteem it a pleasure to be introduced into the presence of a body of learned philosophers, nor would he participate in or relish their most interesting discussions. Infinitely less could the sinner enjoy the society of heaven, or the service of God. The language of Milton, as put into the mouth of Satan, applies equally well to every sinner.

"Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne

With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced hallelujahs, while he lordly sits
Our envied Sovereign, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
Eternity so spent, in worship paid
To whom we hate!"

The poet Cowper expresses the same thought, in those lines,—

"Had I a throne above the rest,
Where angels and archangels dwell,
One sin, unslain, within my breast,
Would make that heaven as dark as hell."

Perhaps I address a reader, some twelve or fifteen years of age, who has not yet repented of his sins, and has experienced but a few of the miseries to which I have alluded in the previous chapters. He may possibly regard the picture as overdrawn, and feel no uneasiness about the future, even though he remains in sin. I have a few words for such an one. I admit that you may not at first feel the consequences of sin, to any great extent. A person bitten by a rabid animal,

after the momentary pain is allayed, and the wound healed, may think himself past danger, and engage in the amusements and pursuits of life with all the delight and ardor of the most frivolous and gay. But, for all this, the fatal poison is in his body, gliding through every vein, and infecting every part of the system with death. Days, weeks, perhaps years, of thoughtlessness pass away, and the wound is almost forgotten. But suddenly the dreadful venom rises upon him, and after a few terrible symptoms, subdues and overwhelms him with despair and horror, from which no human power can deliver him. So the venom of sin often works secretly in the mind, and so silently, that the sinner anticipates no danger till the dreadful disease rises upon him in its strength, and hurries him to irretrievable ruin. He carries a viper in his bosom, which at any instant may pierce him to his soul, and for ever destroy his peace.

Take another illustration. In the time of our Saviour, and for many years afterwards, Mt. Vesuvius presented a scene of beauty

and felicity delightful to behold. It was covered with pleasant villas, and enlivened by a numerous population. At its foot were gay and smiling meadows, verdant valleys, fragrant orange groves, and fruitful vineyards. It was a delightful spot. True, a careful observer might detect a few traces of some former volcanic eruption; but as history had recorded no such catastrophe, there appeared to be no reason to apprehend danger. But what a change took place in a few hours, when rivers of burning lava burst forth from its crater, and rushed down the sides of the mountain, overwhelming in torrents of fire every thing that was pleasant and useful, and burying large cities in its course! Was there no danger when all was fair and bright? And is not danger often concealed in this world, till the fatal moment of destruction arrives? Say not, then, that *you* are in no danger, because you are now in the sunshine of prosperity. Who knows what a day may bring forth? The interval between the full tide of prosperity of Sodom and Gomorrah, and their overthrow, was but one night. The

wickedness of Haman was punished by an ignominious death, at a time when he was at the zenith of his glory; he went from the king's banquet to the gallows. I would therefore say to every reader, without hesitation, "Be sure your sin will find you out." Num. 32: 23.

But perhaps you cannot convince yourself that such serious results as I have spoken of will flow from so remote and trifling a cause as you esteem sin. You think it a little thing to transgress God's moral law, provided you keep yourself clear from vice and crimes. But do you not know that what men look upon as a trifling thing, too small for their notice, sometimes proves sufficient to produce a great effect? How often, for instance, does the humble plant coil up in its leaves that which can paralyze into idiocy the wisest sage, or strike lifeless to the dust the strongest frame! Indeed, we ourselves often suffer from causes so latent or trivial, that we do not suspect them. A tight shoe, in some cases, will produce headache; and a tight cravat about the neck will sometimes

bring on apoplexy, which may end in death. In like manner, sin,—though in your darkened and perverted eye it loses nearly all its deadliness and power,—may be silently working upon your soul, changing it into the same image, from shame to shame, and preparing it to suffer the keenest agony, whenever God's Spirit, like a midnight flash of lightning, shall dart a ray of light into your mind. "Sin," says Jeremy Taylor, "is first easy, then pleasant, then agreeable, then delightful, then the man is far from God, then he is obstinate, then he resolves never to repent, and then he is damned." Reader, in which of these stages do you find yourself to-day?

III.

THE SINNER SAVED.

REMARKS.

It would be of little consequence for us to understand the nature and effects of a disease of which we were dying, if there were no remedy within our reach. So all the knowledge we could obtain of the ruinous consequences of sin,—that great moral disease,—would be useless, and only aggravate our suffering, were there no cure for the sorrowing, dying soul. But there *is* a Physician capable of healing us, as I shall endeavor to show, after first convincing my readers that they can never cure themselves. And I may add, that I rejoice in being thus permitted to point them to the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;" for I could have no heart to paint in such dark colors the depravity of man, and the ruin he has brought upon himself, were I not able also to direct the guilty to "a fountain filled with blood," in which they may "lose all their guilty stains."

THE SINNER SAVED.

CHAPTER I.

THE SINNER CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF.

A sentiment of Juvenal—The downward progress—Sin an endless disease—Six reasons for this fact—A frightful aspect of sin—Its tendency to destroy all good—Strength of sin—An illustration—The fountain of evil inexhaustible—The law will not save the sinner—An anecdote—Morality will not save him—An illustration—Partial reformation useless—Sacrifices and penances in vain—Nothing acceptable from sin—The dangers of self-righteousness—Selfish motives—The help of man in vain.

JUVENAL, an ancient heathen poet, said, in one of his poems,

"He that once sins, like him that slides on ice,
Goes swiftly down the slippery ways of vice;
Though conscience checks him, yet these rubs gone o'er,
He slides on smoothly, and looks back no more."

This verse expresses a truth to which I would call the reader's attention, viz.,—that

it is the universal tendency of sin, when left to itself, to *grow worse and worse;* and, therefore, that sin can never cure itself. Vice has never yet manifested any tendency to become virtue, nor sin to become holiness. They both tend to ruin and death,—not to happiness and life. Neither is there any such thing as *standing still* in sin. There must always be decided and rapid *progress.* "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3: 13. The little child, who now trembles at the commission of a single sin, because his conscience tells him it is wrong, will soon, if left to his own way, like the sinners of old, "do evil with both hands earnestly." Micah 7: 3.

Sin is very appropriately compared to a disease, in the Bible. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." Is. 1: 5. But some look upon it as a violent disease, which rapidly reaches its crisis, and then still more rapidly passes off, leaving no trace behind, after death. This is a false and unscriptural view. Sin is indeed a violent

disease; but so far from its passing quietly away, it is continually growing worse, when left to itself, never reaching a crisis, but destined to rage with increasing violence for ever. It is a common thing to speak of the *end* of sin; and perhaps a wrong impression is sometimes conveyed to the minds of others. Sin, unrepented of, *will never end.* The Creator, now dishonored and despised, will in the future world assume the office of Judge, and deal out to his enemies a cup of retribution, whose dregs will never be drained, whose bottom will never be seen. Sin will augment and increase in the world to come, but never diminish. It is a viper that breeds its own kind in a most prolific manner, and thus keeps permanent possession wherever it is once admitted, unless cast out by the direct power of God.

There are several reasons for this. 1. It is the nature of moral principle to grow by exercise. As constant action of your arm will strengthen its muscles, so a continued exercise of the principle of enmity to God will strengthen that principle, and bind you

more firmly to your evil ways. 2. Conscience becomes seared, when it is disregarded, and makes less and less resistance, the farther the sinner goes. Of course, the difficulties in his way, arising within, are rapidly removed. "Purity of mind," says Andrew Fuller, "like cleanliness of apparel, is accompanied with a desire of avoiding every thing that might defile;" but "the child that is accustomed to rags and filth, loses all shame, and feels no ambition to appear neat or decent." 3. Under these circumstances, the sinner is peculiarly exposed to be overcome by temptations; for his principal safeguards are removed. 4. The power of association now lends its aid, to lead him farther from God. He has become used to his sinful ways, and companions, and would have to sunder many ties, to reform. 5. Soon, secret skepticism begins to make inroads upon his belief, and the longer he trifles with sin, the less he believes in its penalty. 6. The power of habit at length becomes so irresistible, as to bind him for ever in his lost state; and thus he becomes desperate and reckless.

This is one of the most frightful aspects of sin; but how often do we see it exemplified! These are the steps by which multitudes pass down to eternal death. And this discloses the reason why so few persons who have passed the meridian of life are ever converted to Christ. As the prophet has said, "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Jer. 4: 22. Reader, if you are still in sin, the gloomiest and most melancholy aspect of your case is in the future, not in the past. Your past guilt is deep and dark enough; but it is nothing compared to that which is before you, directly in your path.

Another reason why sin will never cure itself, is, that its tendency is to *destroy all good.* Wherever the restraints of a Christian land are unknown, it will be found to consume almost every natural affection, beginning with the noblest, and descending to the lowest. It is like a canker or a rust in the soul, ever spreading and increasing. But this is not the worst. Were it possible, it would destroy all that is good in the universe,

—yes, even God himself, and raise evil spirits to the throne of heaven. We see this illustrated in the history of every heathen nation. They have, in effect, dethroned the one only and true God, and, so far as possible, banished virtue and holiness from the universe. God did not originally create pagans, telling them to increase and multiply, and yet withholding from them the true religion. Every nation that ever has been, or is now, the votary of a false religion, turned away to darkness, in the first place, of its own accord. Such communities are striking illustrations of the tendency of sin to subvert all good. Sin does nothing by halves. It will allow no compromise, no division of its claims. It will have the whole, if any.

The *strength of sin* is another reason why the sinner will not heal himself. A moral appetite overpowers and enslaves him. Our *physical* appetites are very strong. Look at the man of intemperate habits, or the avaricious man,—you can hardly estimate the strength of their appetites. But a moral appetite is capable of being far stronger than

these. Such, indeed, is that desperate appetite in the heart of the sinner, which is the root and trunk of all sin. It is stronger than any natural affection. For instance, take the following familiar case. A child has a parent whom he tenderly loves, and whom he tries to make happy. That parent is a Christian, and desires, more than any thing else, the salvation of that child. The youth knows he can do nothing that would rejoice his parent more than to give his heart to God. But he will not do it. He will do any thing for his pious parent but this. Is not his aversion to God greater than his filial affection?

This appetite for sin is so strong that it will stoutly resist the weightiest rebukes and commands of God, as well as his most tender persuasions and solemn admonitions. Yes, it will madly withstand the retributions of eternity,—not merely when they are seen in the dim distance, but even when they are just at hand. How often is the sinner, on his death-bed, wholly unmoved by the terrors of the judgment, and by every consideration

that can be urged upon the conscience. Sin is too strong to be overcome; and thus is verified that text, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." Prov. 5: 22.

We have thus seen, that, for three reasons, sin can never cure itself. Its fearful strength, and its tendency to destroy all good, and to grow continually worse, for ever cut off all hope from this quarter. It is, therefore, in vain for the sinner to wait for the fountain of evil to dry up. This were a more hopeless task than even that of the simple rustic, alluded to by an ancient poet, who waited on the banks of the Tiber for the water to pass by, that he might cross to the opposite side. Fountains sometimes dry up, and time-worn channels forsake their ancient courses; but the fountain of sin must for ever send forth its poisonous, deadly stream of corruption and evil. They who expect a kind of "spontaneous evaporation of human depravity," either in this world, or that to come, are trusting in a most absurd and miserable delusion.

But, admitting that sin will never change itself to holiness, is there nothing that a sinner can do, to purify his heart, and recommend himself to the mercy of God? Can he not work out his own salvation, and thus escape much of the suffering which sin brings with it in this world, as well as the despair awaiting him in the world to come? Some suppose he may do this; but I shall endeavor to show that every effort of this kind will be a positive failure. And I would here remark, that all the schemes which I shall notice are frequently suggested to the convicted sinner by Satan,—that arch empiric and subtle impostor, into whose care too many souls are committed, to be healed of their sorrows.

1. If the sinner directs his eye to the *law*, as a source of hope, he is doomed to utter disappointment. He has broken that law times without number, and in ways innumerable. Often, when unconscious that he was doing wrong, he has transgressed it; and so accustomed has he become to his trespasses, that his thoughts, his words or his actions are every day in direct rebellion against it. Ad-

mitting that he could now, of his own accord, break off from his evil ways, and henceforth keep the law of God perfectly (and we are supposing a moral impossibility) I would ask, how can he ever make any satisfaction for the sins he has already committed? Will his future obedience atone for his past transgressions? Certainly not; and it would be perfectly impossible for him to make any satisfaction for his sins. And yet not a few hope to obtain eternal life by obeying the law of God. "I care nothing about your theology," said a man to Rev. Dr. C——; "my religion is the ten commandments; that is sufficient for me." "A very good religion," said the clergyman. "Indeed," replied the other, "I did not suppose you would approve of it." "O yes," was the answer, "it is an excellent religion; I know of nothing better. But, my good friend, suppose you never kept *one* of those ten commandments, in the spirit of it,—suppose your whole life has been contrary to them all,—what then?" "O, we all have our faults," said the other. "Yes," replied the minister, "we do all

have our faults, and God has his righteousness; and let me tell you, sir, that if you have no Saviour to honor that law in your stead, you must be lost for ever," Think of the absurdity of supposing that the law was sent into the world to save sinners! It came to condemn, not to save. It brings sin to light, and, as every Christian can testify, sheds a sunbeam into the unknown depths of depravity. How vain, then, for condemned sinners to look to the law for hope!

"God's holy law transgressed,
Speaks nothing but despair;
Convinced of guilt, with grief oppressed,
We find no comfort there."

2. Some try an easier experiment, and, leaving the heart pretty much to itself, endeavor to purchase exemption from the punishment of sin by outward *morality* or *virtue*. This, also, is a fruitless labor. External morality is a good thing, but it can no more save the sinner, than the cold moonbeams of a winter's night can warm and vivify the freezing traveler. When a father, who has

always maintained a spotless character in his family and among his relatives, commits a crime against the laws of his country, he becomes a criminal, and is exposed to the punishment, no less than if he had been unfaithful and vicious. He cannot plead the virtuous deeds done to his friends, as an excuse for crimes committed against the public good. He is arrested as a criminal, tried as a criminal, and punished as a criminal. And believe me, reader, morality and virtue alone will not save *you*. They cannot atone for your guilt, but,—mark this truth,—if they accompany a heart dead in sin, and full of enmity to God, they will only increase that guilt, and aggravate your final doom. Their presence proves that you treat no being so badly as you treat your Creator.

3. Some think to escape divine justice by a *partial reformation* in their outward conduct. They lop off the limbs and branches, leaving the root and trunk of iniquity still firmly standing. But all reformations of this kind are only an exchange of vices and sins. In the sight of God, the heart is as black,

and rebellious, and desperately depraved, as before. They have only garnished the outside, while within, death and corruption revel undisturbed.

4. But the most popular and dangerous scheme of all remains to be noticed. Many people, being convicted of sin, and feeling that they cannot obey the law perfectly, and that outward virtue and reformation cannot satisfy the claims of God, think that they can secure the forgiveness of sin by *penances* and *sacrifices* of their own. This is a favorite doctrine with Pagans, Mohammedans and Romanists, though it is not confined to them. Many in our midst, who do not openly profess it, secretly live according to it, and build their hopes upon it. But it is a foundation of sand. It overlooks the fact, that the offering of no sinner can be acceptable to God, so long as the heart is withheld. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;

and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6: 7, 8. All the fasts, humiliations, self-inflictions, sacrifices and offerings in the world will not cleanse the guilty soul. As well may the leper seek to wash away his defiling spots with water, as the sinner endeavor to cleanse himself from guilt by works of penance or tears of contrition. He may even suffer himself to be imprisoned for life within the gloomy walls of a convent, and, secured from all contamination from without, he may make it the great business of his life to mortify his flesh and afflict his soul; but all his efforts will be in vain, and on his death-bed he will be the same miserable, lost, unpardoned sinner, that he was when he forsook the world for the cloister, with the exception that he is far more self-righteous. To say a man is saved by his good works, is to say he is saved by his sins. But we know sin cannot bring a worthy offering to God. Even tears of penitence and a broken heart are not accepted on account of their worth, but only for the

sake of Christ. The tears of a criminal cannot atone for his guilt, in the eye of the law. So, likewise,

> "Not all our groans and tears,
> Nor works which we have done,
> Nor vows, nor promises, nor prayers,
> Can e'er for sin atone."

Most wisely has it been said, that "many have passed the rocks of gross sin, that have been cast away upon the quicksands of self-righteousness." Such is the fate of those who depend on their own efforts for salvation, by adopting either of the four schemes to which I have alluded. They trust to a broken staff, "whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it." Is. 36: 6. No man ever trusted in his own heart but he found it false. Moreover, they attempt an impossible work. Human skill and application may restore reason to the maniac, or health to the dying man; but never holy affections to a heart alienated from God. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14: 4.

Reader, did it ever occur to you to ask what are the *motives* of those who seek to save themselves, in any of the ways I have mentioned? Here you will find another very good reason why all their efforts are worse than useless. *Selfishness* is at the bottom of all. They fear the penalty of sin, not the sin itself. They tremble at the wrath of God, but care not for the dishonor they bring upon his law. They dread punishment, but love evil. They wish to escape hell, but do not and cannot love heaven. A little boy, who had been taught to pray to God morning and evening, was overheard one day, after he had been punished at school for some offence, praying to God that he might never again be whipped. This is a perfect illustration of the natural heart. It does not ask to be delivered from sin, but only from its punishment. And can it be expected that God will crown with success efforts made in such a spirit as this? No, every sinner who is truly converted is influenced by nobler and higher motives, as well as by those that appeal to his hopes and fears.

It is in vain, therefore, that we look to man for help, or trust in any earth-born scheme. Human wisdom never yet discovered a remedy for sin, or a sure balm for the wounded spirit. The sects of ancient philosophers who flourished for four or five hundred years, and spent their lives in examining, inquiring, disputing and teaching,—what did they all accomplish? Though eminently endowed with eloquence, and gifted with genius, did they not leave mankind where they found them,—in the same perplexities, prejudices, and blindness of heart, and exposed to the same wrath of the Almighty on account of sin? "And, indeed," to use the words of another, "how could they labor for the reformation of the human heart, as they neither knew wherein it was irregular, nor the source of its irregularity?" So at the present day, however important human exertions may be, they can accomplish but little in this work, alone. We are thus shut up to this one conclusion, "Earth has no Saviour, if its Saviour be not God."

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST THE SINNER'S SAVIOUR.

A heathen's opinion of Christianity—The sinner's religion—The truth revealed, that sin may be pardoned—A brief history of man's redemption—Forgiveness offered to all—The rich blessing of salvation—Kindness of God in planning a system of grace—A common illustration of his mercy compared with this—An exhibition of the love of Christ—His benevolence compared with that of two remarkable philanthropists—Gospel, or "glad tidings"—Story of a heathen devotee—The reader reminded of the infinite evil of sin—Counsels and warnings.

In the early ages, Christianity was called "the vile sinner's religion," by some of its bitter opponents. They chose to call it thus, because it was founded on the doctrine that man is a lost sinner, and could be delivered from death only by the sacrifice of Christ. The Christian's Bible, too, had much to say of sin and its consequences,—subjects concerning which heathen authors were almost silent. These proud philosophers, therefore,

thought they were applying to it a title of severe reproach, when they stigmatized it as the sinner's religion. But never were men more mistaken. This very name is its glory and excellence. The religion of Christ *is* "the vile sinner's religion,"—the only hope of the dying soul; and blessed be God that he has made it known unto us. Burdened, fainting, dying beneath the weight of earthly sorrow, here we find relief and consolation. Here the thirsty soul drinks of the water of life. Here the conscience-stricken sinner beholds the arrow plucked from his breast, and a healing balm applied to the wound. Here the poor, the miserable, the lost, the outcast, find "a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

But how is all this good accomplished?—how are these blessings secured? That simple text answers the question,—"THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH THEE, that thou mayest be feared." Ps. 130: 4. Blessed sentence! worthy to be written in letters of gold, and inscribed in deep lines on every heart. No wonder that it gave peace and joy to the

sorrowing heart of the sainted Owen, when nothing else could comfort him. Said an ancient Greek poet, "Forgiveness is the only cure of sin." This is a truth to which not every pagan has attained; but it is one which the Christian understands and most deeply feels. It is a Bible truth, and the basis of the plan of salvation, which it is the design of the present chapter to unfold.

When our first parents sinned, God foresaw the dreadful consequences of their fall. He knew the wretchedness, the degradation and the wo which it must inevitably bring down upon their posterity. And when he visited paradise, to pronounce sentence upon its guilty inhabitants, he pitied their misery, and promised them a Saviour. This promise was afterwards renewed, from time to time, and psalmists and prophets caught now and then a glimpse of the glorious work of redeeming love. Sacrifices and ceremonies were instituted among God's chosen people, to remind them of him who was to come. Types and shadows were employed, to teach them the object and nature of the work to be accom-

plished. To this great event, every thing else seemed to point; around it clustered all the hopes and promises which God made to man; and for its fulfilment the powers of heaven and earth seemed to be enlisted.

In the fullness of time, the Son of God appeared among men. He became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was despised and rejected of his brethren and nation. He was persecuted and reviled, oppressed and afflicted; yet he murmured not. He suffered not for himself, but for us; and on him was laid the iniquity of us all. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that by his stripes we might be healed. And at length, after years of toil and suffering, spent in ministering to the wants of the needy, and reclaiming the lost, he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and humbling himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He thus suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, and by his own blood obtain eternal redemption for us.

"He took the dying traitor's place,
And suffered in his stead;
For sinful man,—O, wondrous grace!—
For sinful man he bled!"

This is a simple sketch, but it tells the history of man's redemption. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 1: 16. There is, therefore, no reason why any should now groan under the condemnation of sin in this life, or lie for ever under the weight of divine justice in the world to come. A voice reaches the ear of every guilty soul, crying, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Is. 43: 25. To all, the promise is addressed, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Is. 1: 18. God has proclaimed himself to man, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniqui-

ty, and transgression, and sin." Ex. 34: 6, 7. The way of reconciliation is opened, and all things are ready. There is hope for the sinner. He can return to his Father's house, with the certainty of meeting a kind and cordial welcome. He can escape many of the present evils of sin, and look forward a few years to the day when he shall be set free from all earthly corruption and sorrow. A highway is laid out from earth to heaven. Guides and accommodations are freely provided for his benefit. He need but knock, and the gate will be opened. He is required to bring no offering but a contrite heart. His past debt is forgiven, and his future wants are all provided for. The thick cloud of sin, which once intercepted the beams of divine favor, is dispelled by the sun of righteousness. He hears a voice, whispering to his soul, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions." Is. 44: 22. He has become the fortunate possessor of the "pearl of great price;" and he knows, from his own experience, that the riches of the Christian are "so many that they cannot be numbered, so

precious that they cannot be valued, and so great that they cannot be measured." Christ is now the theme of his daily contemplations, and his song in the house of his pilgrimage; and he feels that, even were he called to the stake, he could join with the martyr of old, who lifted his burning hands from the midst of the flames, and exclaimed, "None but Christ! none but Christ!"

Such, youthful reader, are the fruits of Christ's redemption. The skill and learning of no human being could ever satisfactorily answer that momentous question, "How should man be just with God?" Job 9: 2. Indeed, the question itself might never have occurred to man, had he been left to himself. When our first parents realized their fall, they did not fly to the presence of God, and throw themselves at his feet, and mingle their tears with the dust, and refuse to be comforted till some kind, forgiving word had fallen upon their ear. No, they did not so much as *think* of seeking forgiveness, or of preparing a way of reconciliation to their Creator. They went and hid themselves, thinking to avoid his

piercing eye, and escape the frown of divine justice. And our own hearts naturally prompt *us* to act in the same manner. But God himself has worked out the problem above stated, and demonstrated the way in which sinners may be forgiven, and reconciled unto himself. The result is fully recorded in the word of God; and thus, instead of being left in our natural darkness and blindness, with but a feeble light to shine on our path,—

"Enough to glimmer o'er the yawning wave,
But not to point the harbor which might save,"—

we are permitted to live in the full light of the gospel, by which our whole danger and our whole duty are made clear. While we are grateful for these blessed privileges, we surely ought to profit greatly by them.

There are several thoughts suggested by our Saviour's atonement for sin, and intimately connected with the subject of this book, which are too important to be passed over.

1. How great is the mercy of God! It is indeed wonderful what provision he has made for the happiness of man,—the rebellious

inhabitant of this little and distant world. This thought is often suggested by his kindness in providing for our temporal wants and sorrows. We know that bodily suffering is one of the consequences of our sinfulness; yet what a multitude of soothing medicines has he provided, to allay pain and restore health. Look at a single illustration. In many parts of the world, he has caused plentiful springs to issue from the earth, whose waters possess the property of restoring "saving health" to those who suffer from disease. The simple element, in its subterranean courses, is made to pass over beds of lime, and magnesia, and sulphur, and iron, and traverse fields of mineral deposit, or purifying salt, till, impregnated with stimulating gases, it at length rises to the surface, and gushes forth in sparkling rills. This simple spring, containing, as it does, healing virtues which no human skill can imitate, is a delightful exhibition of the goodness and mercy of God. But what is this, in comparison with the provision he has made for the diseases of the soul!

2. What an exhibition have we here of the love of Christ! Think what he has endured for our sins. Estimate, if you can, the sacrifice he made, when he voluntarily forsook his throne, and became a servant, despised and rejected of those for whom he suffered. But your thoughts stagger beneath the burden, though they bear no adequate proportion to the reality. It is a theme beyond your grasp, and you can only exclaim, with the devout Pollok,

"O love, all height above, all depth below,
Surpassing far all knowledge, all desire,
All thought,—the Holy One for sinners dies!
The Lord of life for guilty rebels bleeds,—
Quenches eternal fire with blood divine!
Abundant mercy! overflowing grace!"

An old man once lived in Marseilles, who had, by the most laborious industry, and the severest abstinence, amassed a large fortune. He was regarded by those who knew him as a desperate miser, and was greeted, wherever he appeared, with insults and execrations. But at length he died, and the following sentence was found in his will:—"Having

observed from infancy that the poor of Marseilles are ill supplied with water, which can only be procured at a great price, I have cheerfully labored the whole of my life to procure them this great blessing; and I direct that the whole of my property shall be laid out in building an aqueduct for their use." This was indeed an extraordinary example of benevolence and love,—of self-denying sacrifice for the good of others. But after all, it is a slight thing, compared with the exhibition of love witnessed in the life and death of our Saviour. Contrast the two, and nothing more need be said to establish the point.

Take another case of still greater benevolence, and one, I believe, which is well authenticated. The celebrated Vincent de Paule was one day passing through a town in France, if I remember aright, when his attention was attracted by a sight which at once deeply affected his benevolent heart. A man, convicted of some offence, was about to endure the horrors of the life of a galley slave, for three years, and was just taking leave of his family. The intense agony of the father,

and the bitter sorrow of the family, so moved the philanthropist's heart, that he immediately consented to take the place of the poor culprit; and he actually did wear the chains and endure the sufferings which were about to be inflicted upon the prisoner, so that to the day of his death he bore scars of the physical suffering he had so generously endured. Here we have another extraordinary instance of disinterested benevolence, resembling, in many points, that which fills the heart of our Saviour. But at best it is a feeble parallel to his, who came down from heaven to save his enemies, and who patiently suffered death that they might live. It is but a finite illustration of the infinite.

3. We see why the history of Christ is called the *gospel*, or "glad tidings." It is truly "glad tidings of great joy" to the converted sinner. Not long since, a certain man on the Malabar coast, who had inquired of various devotees and priests how he might make atonement for his sins, was directed to drive iron spikes through his sandals, and placing his naked feet on them, thus to walk

about 480 miles. He undertook the journey; but while resting one day under a large, shady tree, where the gospel was sometimes proclaimed, one of the missionaries came and preached in his hearing from the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." This was strange news to the poor pagan, and ere the sermon was finished, he rose up, threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud, "This is what I want!" and from that time he became a living witness that the blood of Jesus does indeed cleanse from all sin. Now, was not the gospel glad tidings to him? We, who have been familiar with its hopes and promises from our earliest years, can hardly appreciate this thought. But the thousands of Christian converts in heathen lands can tell us what it means.

4. In the death of Christ, we are most affectingly reminded of the dreadful evil of sin. He could cure the diseases of the body by a word; but to heal the soul it cost his own blood. After looking to the cross, it would seem that we never could again forget that we are in a revolted world. While we

tread the earth that drank the blood of the Son of God,—while we breathe the atmosphere that wafted his groans to heaven,—while we walk under the sky that was once hung in darkness over the solemn scene of Calvary, surely we can never deny the dreadful reality of sin, or esteem it a trifling evil.

In closing, I have one or two friendly counsels for the reader. Remember that text, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3: 5. In other words, remember "a man may go to heaven without health, without wealth, without learning, without friends,—but he never can go to heaven without Christ." Never forget that Jesus is the only sure foundation; and that all others, though they be as venerable as the pyramids of Egypt, whose history is lost in antiquity, are yet but as sand;

"And he who builds his towering schemes
On surge-like bases, such as these,
Rears but a pyramid of dreams
Upon the ever-shifting seas."

Finally, imitate the example of the excellent John Newton, who used to say, when his memory was nearly gone, "that forget what he might, he could never forget two things: 1. That he was a great sinner; and 2. That Christ was a great Saviour." Reader, remember these two facts, whatever else you forget.

CHAPTER III.

THE METHOD OF SALVATION.

To the inquirer—The Siberian exiles, illustrating the position of impenitent sinners—Something more necessary—Testimony of the Bible—Conversion not a mere reformation—Story of an Athenian youth—A mere change of emotions not conversion—Nor a change of opinions—Nor an observance of forms—Bible definition of conversion—A symbol of the new birth—Work of the Holy Spirit—No one would have been saved but for the Spirit—This truth applied to the reader—The several stages in conversion—The enthusiastic painter, and the portrait of the Saviour—Emotions of the penitent soul in view of Christ—Previous views contrasted—Anecdote of Cecil—Feelings of a pardoned soul.

If any reader has become interested in the views I have presented of the evils of sin, and has heard a whisper within his own heart, confirming what has been said, and urging him to fly to the relief pointed out in our last chapter,—if I have such a reader, what I am now about to write is affectionately addressed to him. He needs some farther instruction,

that he may repair to the fountain opened for sin, and become clean.

Suppose a band of exiles in Siberia, who had been banished from their country for forgery and theft, should receive a message from their emperor, informing them that a benevolent individual had determined to release them, and had paid the amount of their debt, though it made him poor. These exiles, we will suppose, had been sent to that cold and desolate region, to labor in the mines so long as their health and strength permitted, and were then to be put to death. The messenger finds them toiling, and suffering every hardship, and hastens to deliver his errand. But, strange to relate, no one regards it. Another is soon sent, to expostulate with them; and he informs them that their benefactor has not only purchased their pardon at an immense sacrifice, but has also procured a comfortable estate for each of them, which they shall be welcome to, if they will return and become virtuous citizens. He, too, urges every argument, but in vain. At length their benevolent friend himself goes to them, and, after encoun-

tering much suffering and toil, finds them bowed down in bondage. He speaks, but they refuse to hear. He invites, and pleads, but in vain. They take no notice of his message, except to make objections and excuses. One does not wish to undertake such an unpleasant journey. Another is so busily employed in gathering silver and gold (though for the benefit of others), that he cannot leave the mines. Another has married a wife, or formed acquaintances, and he cannot go. Another (strange infatuation!) believes the whole story a fable, and regards the kind philanthropist as a base impostor. And, in short, all of them are wedded to their vicious ways, and do not wish to be under the restraints of good society.

This, young friends, is the strange position in which men place themselves, till the Spirit of God comes into their hearts. Christ has died for them; but they will neither repent nor believe. There is, therefore, something yet to be done, to make his death of any avail to a single transgressor. In the expressive language of the Bible, man must be "born

again," become a "new creature," be "renewed in the spirit of his mind," "put on the new man," "pass from death unto life," and become possessor of a "new heart." Our Saviour himself declared, in the most solemn manner, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3: 3, 7. There must, therefore, be a great change in the sinner, before he can become a partaker of the righteousness which is by faith. What is this change? At this point a great many fatal mistakes are made; and that my readers may avoid them, it may be well to show, first, what this change is *not*, and then what it *is*.

1. Conversion is not an outward reformation of conduct. Great changes of this kind have sometimes been produced by pagan teachers of morality. A young Athenian, named Polemon, who was much given to vice, and was infamous for his irregularities, in which he gloried, in returning from a debauch one day, passed by the school of Xenocrates, a celebrated philosopher of Athens. Observing the door open, he went in, full of wine,

sweet with essence, and with a wreath on his head; and, less to hear than out of insolence, he seated himself among the auditors. The whole assembly were surprised and offended; but the philosopher, without betraying the least emotion, varied the discourse, and introduced the subjects of temperance and sobriety, and the opposite vices. The young libertine, who listened with attention, opened his eyes to the deformity of his character, and was soon heartily ashamed of himself. The wreath fell from his head. With downcast eyes he hid himself in his cloak; and instead of the gay insolence with which he entered the school, he became serious and thoughtful. From that hour an entire change of conduct ensued. He became a philosopher himself, and never departed from the wisdom and sobriety which his master set before him.

Here was a great change, every one will admit. But this is not conversion. This is not what the Scriptures mean by the terms I have quoted. The *heart*, beyond doubt, was not affected, at least in its emotions toward God; and in this light, the reckless libertine

and the grave philosopher were equally odious in the eye of Heaven.

2. Conversion does not consist in a succession of terrors and consolations. This is an error to which many are exposed, in seasons of general religious interest. A youth, little acquainted with the Bible, becomes deeply anxious, and manifests much feeling on the subject of religion. For weeks, perhaps, he feels himself a lost sinner, and mourns over his dreadful state. But suddenly he thinks (he knows not why) that he has experienced a change of heart. Full of joy, he hastens to tell his friends the glad tidings; and soon he presents himself for admission to the church. Question him now, and perhaps you will find him ignorant of the first principles of religion, and unable to give any intelligent account of his conversion; but it would be a hopeless task to convince him that he is not a Christian. The sudden change in his feelings is enough for him, and he is offended that any thing more should be required. I have known such cases, and seen the mistaken individuals, after a few years, pursuing the way of death

with the giddy throng, their last state being worse than their first. Is this conversion? Most assuredly it is not.

3. Conversion does not consist in altering one's religious opinions. The pagan may see the folly of idolatry, and renounce it for Christianity; the infidel may be argued into a belief in the Bible; the Papist, or Universalist, or Unitarian, may be convinced that he is in error, and trusts in "another gospel," instead of the gospel of Christ; all this may take place, without the heart of either being in the least affected. The head may be right; but if the heart is wrong, the sinner is still under condemnation.

4. Conversion does not consist in baptism, or the observance of any forms. Says a Roman Catholic catechism, published in this city, "Baptism is a sacrament by which we are made Christians, children of God, and heirs of heaven; and are cleansed from original sin, and also from actual sins, if we be guilty of any." This is the doctrine of the Papal church, but not of the Bible. It is, to speak plainly, a palpable falsehood.

Such are some of the most common errors on this subject. Let us now endeavor to ascertain the true meaning of the second birth. With the Bible before us, we can easily avoid all mistake. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5: 17. "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4: 22—24. This language implies that the new birth is an entire change in the affections of the heart; it is the beginning of the spiritual life; the commencement of holiness in the soul.

Let us illustrate this by a reference to the birth of our first parent. However curiously God wrought upon the body of Adam, one great thing was wanting, till he breathed his own breath into his nostrils. There was an eye, most wonderfully contrived, but it saw not. There was a carefully adjusted ear, but

it heard not. There was a hand, but it moved not. There was a beautiful form, perfect in symmetry, and its thousand parts all wonderfully adapted to each other, but it was still lifeless and motionless. Then God breathed upon it, and in an instant the whole was transformed. That eye opened, and sparkled with joy, as it gazed upon the beauties of creation. Rich notes of music struck upon the ear, and pleasantly vibrated through the soul. Odors laden with perfume, and spicy gales, were wafted to his sense of smell. Delicious fruit melted within his mouth, both gratifying and exciting his taste, and crystal waters delighted his thirsty soul. His body moved with ease and agility, each motion giving pleasure, each step discovering new objects of delight.

Here we have an emblem of that second birth, that new creation, spoken of in the Bible. The sinner is *dead* in trespasses and sin; and though many lovely and beautiful things may appear in his character, he has no spiritual life. But when the Spirit breathes upon his lifeless soul, then does he experience

a change beautifully analogous to that just described. The glory of God, the excellency of Christ, the hallowed influences of the Spirit, and the preciousness of the word of life,—these, and many other things, now appear to him in a new light. His soul is now endowed with life, his mental eye is opened, and he beholds new and wondrous things.

This great change, as already implied, is produced by the Holy Spirit. No sinner was ever converted without his influence. When God planned the work of redemption, he foresaw that no one, of his own accord, would voluntarily give up sin, and seek holiness. Men would not repent, though they saw Jesus on the cross a thousand times. The Father might have pitied and entreated, but in vain; the Son might have hung on the cross for ages, and not one sinner have been saved. God anticipated this; and to meet the difficulty, he made it a part of his plan to send the Holy Spirit to soften and move the hearts of the impenitent. But for this, the mission of Christ would have been a prodigious and costly

journey, to no purpose. In addition to breaking the law, the whole race would have become guilty of the still more awful crime of rejecting and murdering the Son of God. They would thus have rapidly attained the climax of guilt, defeating all God's purposes of mercy to the race, and finally would have been all consigned to endless wo.

I have said that the Father foresaw all this. He therefore sent the Holy Ghost into the world, to finish the work began by the Son. His peculiar mission is to convince of sin, to convert, and to sanctify. The apostle says, "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, *and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" Titus 3: 5. The Bible teaches this doctrine most distinctly in other places; and our own experience confirms the truth. Where is the man, truly converted, who does not confess that he would never have come to the Saviour of his own accord? Inquire of every Christian you know concerning this, and they will all say,

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast
That sweetly forced us in."

This same truth has been experienced by the unconverted, who have put off religion to old age, or the death-bed, and then found themselves unable to receive Christ. Their day of grace was over, and the Spirit had taken its final flight from their cold and stubborn hearts.

But let me press this subject directly to my impenitent reader. How many appeals have fallen upon your ear, and yet moved you not! The solemn admonitions of God's providence, the earnest and pleading eloquence of the Bible, the urgent invitations of your pastor and pious friends, have all been lost. So far as *you* are concerned, the minister of Christ might as well have gone to the grave-yard, and sounded the resurrection cry, summoning the sleepers from the tombs; he could not have been less successful. And why is this? It is because you are dead, and the Spirit of God alone can reach you. That Spirit, it may be, has more than once been granted to you, but you have resisted and grieved it, and therefore still remain in your sins, dead to all holiness.

The first thing the Spirit does, in converting a sinner, is to show him his own heart. The long catalogue of his sins is unrolled, and spread out before him. He sees them as he never saw them before. The blackness of his guilt, the enormity of his crimes, stand out in vivid colors, and appal him. Perhaps sins long forgotten rise from their graves, and appear before him as if committed yesterday. He before knew that he was a sinner, but now he *feels* it, most deeply. It is not strange, therefore, that fear and trembling take possession of his soul. He sees the sword of justice glistening over his head; he hears the muttering of the thunder of God's wrath; he feels that he is lost for ever, unless divine mercy interpose. Despairing of every other hope, he is led to repent of his sins, and mourn in secret over his guilt. Perhaps, as he throws himself upon his knees, his eyes are flowing with tears,—

"Blest tears of soul-felt penitence,
In whose benign, redeeming flow,
Is felt the first, the only sense
Of guiltless joy that guilt can know."

While in this state Christ is presented to him as the Saviour of the lost. And what a moment is that, when, for the first time, he beholds him with an eye of faith, and can exclaim, with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" John 20: 28.

A gentleman in this city, not long since, invited to his house a young man, about eighteen years of age, who had displayed a great native talent for painting, and who came here with the advice of the Governor of his native State, who furnished him with introductions to several artists. In examining the objects of curiosity and beauty with which the gentleman's house is well supplied, his attention was soon drawn to a beautiful painting which the owner had brought from Italy, representing the head of our Saviour. The young artist no sooner beheld it than he was overpowered with the sublimity of the picture, and burst into tears. It far surpassed every thing he had ever conceived of. He gazed upon it with intense delight for some time, and finally left it with great reluctance; for, as he afterwards said, he could have examined

it for a day, without becoming weary. From that moment he desired above every thing else to go to Italy. He was willing to live on bread and water, or take the hard berth of a sailor "before the mast," and sacrifice every comfort, if he could but behold the land which has produced such inimitable works of art. And I presume that ere this he has accomplished his end.

This incident illustrates the feelings of the penitent sinner, when he beholds the portrait of Christ, as exhibited in the Bible, and its glory strikes the eye for the first time. As he gazes upon it hour after hour, he, too, is perhaps constrained to weep. But it is not simply the beauty of the painting which affects *him*, though this is a noble work. It is the *character* he beholds which moves him to tears. He weeps that there is one willing to bear the penalty of his sins, and save him from deserved death. He weeps for joy, that he has found one so perfectly holy, who is not ashamed to be called his friend and brother. And from that moment he resolves that he will see that glorious Saviour, and go to

the world where he dwells, cost what it may. He thinks of nothing else. He will bear any sacrifice, endure any hardship, to go there. And he has this precious promise, that he shall one day see him as he is, and be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. He can then say, in triumph,

> "Go, worldlings, boast of all your stores,
> And tell how bright they shine;
> Your heaps of glittering dust are yours,
> But my REDEEMER'S mine!"

Thus the Holy Ghost enables the penitent sinner to behold in Christ all that is excellent and glorious. Before he saw him by faith, it may be that he appeared like "a root out of the dry ground," and in the way of eternal life. Thus, strange as it may seem, many stumble upon that stone which was laid, not for a stumbling-block, but for "a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone." Thus was it with Richard Cecil, who had been an infidel, but was converted through the prayers and example of his pious mother. When he began to feel a seriousness about his

salvation, he rose from his bed one night, to pray. But he was instantly damped, by recollecting that much of his mother's comfort seemed to arise from her faith in Christ. "Now," thought he, "this Christ I have ridiculed; he stands much in my way, and can form no part of my prayers." In utter confusion, he again retired to his bed. But at length light broke into his mind; and he then discovered that Jesus Christ, so far from standing *in the way*, was himself "the way, the truth, and the life."

When the returning sinner obtains such a view of Christ as this, he quickly loses his anxiety and fear, and finds joy and consolation in their place;—as Bunyan's pilgrim, after toiling up the highway of Salvation, suddenly felt the irksome burden fall from his shoulders, as he approached the cross, and was constrained to leap for joy. He is overwhelmed with the goodness of God, in forgiving him so freely. When he sought pardon, he did not hear a voice, saying, "How can I forgive thee, thou vile sinner!" His injured Father did not recount the number and magnitude of his

transgressions, and urge this as a reason why he should not forgive him;—no, though he might justly have repelled him in this way, yet he spread out his paternal arms, and said, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found;" and there is joy in heaven at the sight. No wonder that he cannot refrain from praising the Lord for all his goodness. "I know not," recently said a minister, in his last moments, "I know not how I could employ myself among fallen spirits; for I could not help singing, 'Glory to God!'" This is the blessed experience of the true Christian. God grant that we all know what it is.

CHAPTER IV.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE SINNER.

Two classes of reasonable persons—Things to be done—We should seek good influences—Use means—Think—The sinner must feel that he is lost—Anecdote of Whitefield—The lost child saved—Secret prayer—Its adaptation to all—Firm decision required—Experience of Lord Littleton—The two decisions—Sinful habits must be abandoned—Self-righteousness renounced—The Indian's explanation—Willingness to be saved as a sinner—Remark of a prince—How Jeremiah was rescued from the pit—False hopes must be renounced—An Indian's illustration—Perseverance—Danger of despair—Snares of Satan—No cause for despair—The shipwreck—Concluding remarks.

THE learned and pious Pascal once said, that "there are but two sorts of persons who can properly be styled reasonable; those who serve God with all their heart, because they know him; and those who seek him with all their hearts, because as yet they know him not." I would fain hope that all my readers belong to one of these two classes; but the remarks I am about to make will be adapted principally to the latter class.

In converting sinners, the Holy Spirit operates in different ways; and probably no two persons were ever led into the kingdom of heaven by precisely the same steps. But there are certain things which ought to be attended to by all who would become Christians. A proper understanding of them may save much needless trouble, and many mistakes. I now propose, therefore, to lay down some twelve or fourteen directions, for the benefit of those who have a disposition to seek the Lord; and I hope to explain and illustrate them in such a manner, that all may understand them.

1. Place yourself under good influences. Withdraw, as much as possible, from the company of the worldly and trifling, and seek the society of the pious. Let Christians know, by your conduct, that you are willing to be conversed with on the subject of religion, and prayed with. If you know one who is eminently faithful in rebuking sin, and warning the impenitent, do not shun his presence, as your natural heart may perhaps tempt you to do. Keep company with the

good, and you cannot fail to become better yourself.

2. Use means. A residence in a hospital will not cure an individual, without the aid of any physician, or means of recovery. You should not only place yourself within the reach of good influences, but you must use all proper means to accomplish your end. If you are in the midst of a revival, seek to catch the dews of the Spirit upon your own heart, as they descend upon others. Spread your sail to secure the first heavenly breeze. Let the Bible, the prayer-meeting, the sanctuary, and all the ordinary and extraordinary means of grace, testify that you are seeking the converting influences of the Spirit.

3. Think. "Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways." Hag. 1: 5. For once, dismiss the world from your thoughts, and think seriously, deeply, uninterruptedly, of the great truths of the gospel. Revolve in your mind that momentous question, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Matt. 16: 26. Think of your past

life,—of your future hopes. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." Lam. 3: 40. This is the way David did, before his conversion. "I thought on my ways," he says, "and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." Ps. 119: 59. This is the way the prodigal did, before his return to his father. He first "came to himself," and thought how foolish he was to starve among the swine, when in his father's house there was bread in abundance. And the result of his thinking was, that he resolved to return home. So the sinner must "come to himself," before he can come to Christ; and think of his sins, before he thinks of pardon. True, it is a difficult work. Men had rather think of any thing else than of their sins,—rather do any thing else, than look directly into the secret depths of the heart, while the "candle of the Lord" reveals the dark mysteries there concealed. But this must be done, before we can reasonably hope that they have passed from death to life. I therefore entreat the reader, if he has *one* serious thought concerning his soul, to cherish it,

and endeavor, by meditation and retirement, to fan it into being, till it shall take possession of his heart, and change the whole current of his thoughts.

4. Endeavor to realize that you are lost. A brother of the Rev. George Whitefield, after living sometime in a backsliding and careless state, was roused to a perception of his danger, but shortly after sank into melancholy and despondency. He one afternoon drank tea with the Countess of Huntingdon, who endeavored to raise his hopes by conversing on the infinite mercy of God, through Jesus Christ. For a while it was all in vain. "My lady," he replied, "I know what you say is true. The mercy of God is infinite; I see it clearly. But ah, there is no mercy for me. I am a wretch, entirely lost." "I am glad to hear it, Mr. Whitefield," said Lady H., "I am glad at my heart that you are a lost man." He looked with surprise. "What! glad! glad at your heart that I am a lost man?" "Yes, Mr. W., truly glad; for Jesus Christ came into the world to save the lost." This unexpected reply produced

a happy effect upon the desponding man. "Glory to God for that word!" he exclaimed. "O, what unusual power is this which I feel attending it! Jesus Christ came to save the lost! Then I have a ray of hope." This individual felt that he was lost, and confessed it; and reduced to this extremity, he was glad to fly to him who alone can save the lost, and who will save none but the lost. What a happy thing it would be, were all who are alienated from God to confess with sorrow that they are poor, and sinful, and lost. God says, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." Jer. 3: 13. But how few will do it! Pride, that bane of the soul, will not permit many to own that they are guilty, and ready to perish. They will conceal the truth, if possible, though it proves their ruin.

If the reader follows faithfully the previous direction, and thinks on his ways, he will doubtless be constrained to admit that he is a lost sinner; and if brought to this point, there is some hope that he will *not* be lost.

A few years ago, on a cold winter's night, a boy was overtaken by a dreadful storm, and the snow fell so thick, and drifted in such a manner, that he missed his way, and wandered about for several hours, nearly perished with cold. At midnight, some one in the neighborhood heard a sound, and on opening a window, distinguished a human voice at a great distance, pronouncing, in a piteous tone, "Lost! lost! lost!" Humanity induced him to send out in quest of the person from whom the voice proceeded, when, after a long search, the boy was found, nearly benumbed with cold. Happy was it for him that he knew his danger, that he cried for help, and that his cry was heard! And happy is it for the sinner, when, sensible of his danger, and despairing of every other hope, he throws himself at the foot of the cross, and cries, "Lost! lost! lost!" The Saviour will not reject such a plea as this.

5. Maintain secret prayer. It is impossible to be in a state, in this world, in which it is not suitble and necessary to pray. But there is not a time in which prayer is more

appropriate, than when the sinner is seeking forgiveness. Then, if ever, he should pray earnestly and unceasingly. The contrite confession of the prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight," and the all-prevailing prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," should be on his lips, and in his heart, from morning till night, until he feels that he is heard and answered. The voice of prayer ascends to heaven, as through a speaking-tube. Those around us may hear nothing of it; but there is an ear at the other end, ever listening to hear our cries. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1: 9.

If your convictions of sin are not deep and pungent, go to God with the prayer, "Cause me to understand wherein I have erred." Job 6: 24. If already bowed down with a sense of your guilt, then "take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Hos. 14: 2. And if you have

such a view of sin as overwhelms you with fear and grief, then cry to God, as did the psalmist, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul." Ps. 69: 1. Thus, whatever be the state of your mind, let prayer form a part of your daily life; and make it an indispensable part, too. It will bring down rich blessings upon you, through the intercessions of Christ.

"It gives the burdened spirit ease,
And soothes the troubled breast;
Yields comfort to the mourners here,
And to the weary rest."

6. Determine to do your duty *now*. And what is your duty? Simply to repent, and believe in Christ. You must, then, come to a firm and final decision. It is difficult to do this; for Satan strives hard to tempt the sinner to vacillate and evade, that he may gain time to strengthen his temptations. Beware of this. Meet the question manfully, and at once, and if you think your soul is worth saving, resolve that its salvation shall be secured now. The younger Lord Little-

ton, in early life, was the subject of deep impressions, under the influence of which he one day retired to his chamber to pray. As he was about kneeling, he thought he would turn aside and close the shutter. In doing this, a band of musicians caught his eye, and the splendor of their appearance, and their inspiring notes, so captivated him, that he rushed from his chamber into the crowd. But this weak indecision cost him an immense price. His seriousness was at once banished, and he felt the strivings of the Spirit no more.

There are also certain minor duties, the performance of which may require much decision. A great deal depends on these. Two individuals, of about the same age, and in similar circumstances, left the house of God one evening, under deep conviction of sin. They had reached that point, when their weal or wo for eternity seemed to depend on the decisions of an hour. The pastor had invited the inquiring to meet him after the services, in the lecture room, for conversation and prayer. Thirty or forty accepted the invitation, and these two indi

viduals felt a strong inclination to be among the number. But they had never entered a meeting of inquiry; and to go there as wretched, miserable sinners, asking after the way of life, was deeply humiliating. They walked together to the door, and paused, and then turned toward their homes. But their feelings were too strong to allow them to proceed far. They returned to the door of the vestry, and looked in upon the solemn meeting. Again they started for their homes; and again they were listening to the voice of prayer, and the directions which the minister was giving to the anxious before him. At length one of them resolved that he would go in and take the attitude of an inquirer. The other turned and went his way. The one who entered, dated his conversion from that very hour, and ever after lived a consistent, devoted life. The one who turned away at that moment grieved the Spirit of God from his heart, as a life of thoughtlessness and sin afterwards testified. What a difference did the decisions of that moment make in the character and prospects of those two

individuals! Who can tell what a difference they may have made in their eternal destinies!

7. Abandon all known sin. Were an intemperate, dissipated spendthrift, who was suffering disease in consequence of his vicious courses, to put himself under the care of a physician, he would at once be directed, most imperatively, to abstain from every indulgence of the ruinous vice. Precisely the same direction must be given to the inquirer. "Some sinners," said Dr. Nevins, "repent with an unbroken heart. They are *sorry*, and yet go on, as did Pilate and Herod." But those who truly repent, will naturally hate their sins, and desire to be delivered from them. They will therefore abandon them.

8. Give up all self-righteousness. This is a garment which true Christians never wear; and the sooner the sinner gives it up, the sooner brighten his prospects of becoming a follower of Christ. "How is it that I should be so long under conviction, when you found comfort so soon?" was a question once put

by a white man to an Indian, both of whom had been awakened by the same sermon. "O brother," replied the simple Indian, "me tell you. There come along a rich prince; he promise to give you a new coat; you look at your coat, and say, 'I don't know, my coat pretty good, I believe it will do a little longer.' He then give me new coat. I look on my old blanket; I say, 'This good for nothing.' I fling it right away, and take my new coat. Just so, brother, you try to make your old righteousness do for sometime,—you loth to give it up. But I, poor Indian, had none; therefore I glad to receive at once the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ." The Indian was right. Self-righteousness is often in the way of the convicted sinner.

9. Be willing to be saved *as a sinner*. Self-will,—of which Cecil said, that it "is so ardent and active, it will break a world in pieces to make a stool to sit on,"—is often in the way of the sinner's conversion; and a dangerous stumbling-block it is. He cannot consent to be saved as a lost and miserable sinner, through faith in Christ. He thinks

his own way superior to God's way. This feeling is the offspring of pride, self-will and ignorance, and must be conquered, or all is lost. When the late Duke of Kent,—whose daughter is now on the throne of Great Britain,—was on his death-bed, he expressed some concern about his soul. His physician endeavored to soothe his mind by referring to his high respectability, and his honorable conduct in the distinguished situation in which Providence had placed him. But he was quickly stopped by the dying man, who reproved him by saying, "No, remember that if I am saved, it is not as a prince, but as a sinner."

How unreasonable is it for one who hangs entirely upon the mercy of God, to complain of the means he uses in delivering the helpless sinner from eternal death. When Jeremiah was drawn out from his filthy dungeon, he did not object to the "clouts" and "rotten rags" that were used, but obeyed, and said nothing. Jer. 38: 10—13. A prouder and less wise man would have objected to being drawn up in such a humiliating way, and perhaps would have considered the suggestion an insult. He

would have preferred that some ingenious machinery be employed, or some great spectacle made. The sinner, too, often thinks that "some great thing" will be done for him, and spurns the humbling and simple directions of the man of God. Naaman well nigh lost his cure by a similar pride. But I would not convey the impression that the way of salvation is too strict, or humiliating, or simple. Though it often appears so to the sinner, yet when he is drawn up from the pit, he admires the wisdom of God in providing such a way, and loves and serves him better than if he had been saved by some great display of power.

10. Give up every other hope. As long as you entertain a hope that you can in some other way escape eternal death, you have one foot in the snare of Satan, and are therefore exposed to great peril. But renounce every earthly hope, and feel as Peter did, when, sinking beneath the wave, he exclaimed, "Lord, save me!"—do this, and an almighty arm will interpose in your behalf. There is much truth in the old adage, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Perhaps I cannot

better illustrate this, than by an anecdote I have read of a converted Indian, who was asked to describe the process of conversion. Kneeling upon the sand, he made a small circle of chips and dry leaves. He then placed a little worm inside of the ring, and with a spark from his pipe lighted the pile. The worm, when it began to feel the heat, crept first to one point, then to another; and at last, after many ineffectual attempts to get out, crawled to the centre, as if in despair, and coiled itself up, awaiting the result. When it began to feel the heat too sensibly, the Indian took it in his fingers, and placed it without the ring in safety. "Now," said he, "I will explain my meaning. I was like that poor worm; the fires of hell were burning around me; they began to reach me; I ran every way, I drank fire-water, I tried hunting, every thing; but I could not get out. At last I threw myself down, and tried to pray, and then God stretched forth his hand, and lifting me forth, gave me rest. Now," he continued, "I cannot explain it any better. I cannot tell you how it was done, but I felt a change, and I knew it was so."

11. Persevere. Saul, when he could obtain no answer from God, instead of humbling himself, confessing his sin, and persevering in his efforts, went at once to a witch, and thus sealed his doom. 1 Sam. 28: 6, 7. So sinners sometimes, after seeing in some measure their sinfulness, apply to God for deliverance; and not instantly receiving peace of mind, they turn their backs upon their Maker, and seek comfort from Satan's children. Truly the last state of such is worse than the first.

12. Do not yield to despair. When every other experiment fails, Satan sometimes resorts to this; and some, whom he could not move to presumption, he causes to yield to despair. If he cannot make them feel that they are good enough to go to heaven as they are, he endeavors to convince them that they are so desperately wicked as to be beyond the reach of mercy. "Others may hope for mercy," he whispers in their ear, "but *you* are too far gone. Your day of grace is over. You have grieved the Spirit. It is evident that you are not among God's elect." How many souls has he ruined in this way! Reader, beware of a similar fate. Do not give up the hope of

being converted. Had the prodigal yielded to despair (and how strongly was he tempted to do it!) he would never have been welcomed to the affectionate embrace of his father's arms. Do not let the adversary cheat you into the belief that the decrees of God, and even the Holy Spirit, are against you. You are not a machine, but a free moral agent. If you are saved, it will be because you believed, and not simply because you were elected; and if you are lost, it will be because you voluntarily rejected the Saviour, and not simply because you were not elected. Do you say that God has *decreed* the eternal misery of a part of the race, and therefore you find no encouragement to come? Where do you find that decree? Not in the Bible, surely. I there find a glorious decree,—a decree that inspires hope and faith; and it is this, that a large portion of the race shall be saved from death. This is enough. There is no need of a decree that any shall be lost, for every impenitent sinner is lost and condemned already, and it is only forbearing mercy that stays the arm of Justice for the present. And as to the Spirit, so far from its being against

you, its aid is promised to all who ask for it. —There is, then, no reason why you should despair. True, your difficulties are many; but only be honest and sincere, and God will enable you to overcome them all. "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live." Amos 5: 6. The path to heaven is narrow, but not too narrow for those who wish to pursue a straight and steady course. It is strait and difficult, but yet capable of being pursued by the weakest mortal, who will seek aid from on high.

Again I say, do not yield to despair. The loss of hope is the loss of all. How affectingly has this truth been illustrated! A violent storm once drove a ship upon a dangerous coast. As the peril was every moment increasing, a passenger, who had given up all hopes of being saved, retired to his cabin, and resigned himself to a watery grave. The rest remained on deck. In a moment, an unexpected surge, with an immense swell of the sea, carried the ship over the reef of rocks, and left her, as the sea retired, upon a sand-bank. Instantly the captain and crew jumped upon the sand, and before the return of another wave, got upon an eminence, and

thus providentially escaped death. The waves soon beat the ship to pieces, but that one passenger was the only person lost. Had he been watching, instead of despairing, his life would have been saved. So the sinner must believe that he can be saved, and hope for salvation, or he will certainly lose his soul.

I have thus endeavored to point the inquirer to him who taketh away the sin of the world. I have brought but one message for all classes, and this, I trust, has been delivered faithfully. All are wasting away under the same disease, and all must be healed by the same remedy. What I have written may fall into the hands of many in highly favored New England, whose houses are within sight of church steeples, and who hear the music of the Sabbath bell throughout the year. To these I have but one direction,—Repent, believe in Christ. And as the Society for whose use this book was written are engaged in the good work of scattering Sabbath school libraries in the West, I may, perhaps, address some of the youth of that portion of our land. To them I would deliver the same message,—Repent, believe in Christ. This is our only hope.

CHAPTER V.

SIN SUBDUED, AND THE CURSE REMOVED.

Change produced by conversion—Something more to be done—A contrast between the effects of sin and piety—The heart must be kept right—The thoughts and affections controlled—Sinful habits abandoned—The tongue guarded—Temptation avoided—Good companions selected—The Christian must not trifle with sin—Sin should be feared—Familiarity with the Bible—Our destiny must not be forgotten—Written rules and resolutions—Duty summed up—Difficulty of the work—Need of the Spirit—God's ways of purifying his people—Encouragements—All will be well, after death.

CONVERSION produces a great change in the sinner. Said Justin the martyr, who lived in the second century,—"We, who were once slaves of lust, now have our chief joy in a pious life. Once, we loved gain above every thing else; now, we give our possessions for the common good, and distribute to every one who is needy. Once, we hated and murdered one another; we would not receive into our houses people of foreign climes, because they had different customs from our own. Now,

since the appearance of Christ, we permit them to be our guests. We pray for our enemies. We strive to convince those who hate us unjustly; so that, living according to the glorious teaching of Christ, they may obtain the joyful hope of a participation in the blessings which are prepared for us by God Almighty."

Such has ever been the result of genuine conversion. Sin receives a deadly blow, and Satan is forced from the soul's castle, by one stronger than he. A revolution takes place in the government of the little kingdom, and the rigorous tyranny of Satan gives place to the mild sway of Christ. But still there is much to be done. Though the prince of darkness is cast out, there yet may be rebels and traitors left behind, who are pledged to his cause. The breaches which sin has made in the soul are also to be repaired; and the wilderness is to be cultivated. To drop the figure, bad and long-established habits are to be eradicated, and new ones formed. Even Socrates, the pagan philosopher, could tell us, that "if the soul be immortal, it requires to be cultivated with attention, not only for what

we call the time of life, but for that which is to follow,—I mean eternity; and the least neglect in this respect may be attended with endless consequences." This is in harmony with the Bible. Christians are there taught that they must grow in grace, or advance in sanctification, after their conversion. The soul is to be cultivated. And the glorious and cheering truth is revealed, that the iron band of sin may be broken, and the dark cloud of evils, which once hung over the offender, be for ever dispersed.

Let us stop a moment, and contemplate this truth. We have seen that sin deprives us of God's approbation. But conversion restores it. Sin provokes his wrath. But God is not angry with the Christian; he brings no charge against him. Sin has exposed us to Satan. But Christ is Satan's invincible opponent, and will deliver all who trust in him. Sin awakened bitter remorse of conscience. But heavenly peace of mind is the inheritance of the pardoned soul. Sin made us fear and tremble. "But," says God, "whosoever hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

Prov. 1: 33. Sin made us ashamed of ourselves. But in proportion as we crucify sin, this emotion disappears. Sin seared the conscience. But the Christian heeds the friendly monitor, and thus keeps it in a healthy state. Sin hardened the heart. But this is a process unknown to the righteous. Sin debases the mind. But religion purifies it. Sin degrades its victim. But the child of God is raised to the highest honors heart could wish. Sin has brought into the world an immense amount of physical suffering. But religion, if it does not deliver us from this, makes it work for our good; as Flavel says, "Trouble is a scorpion, and hath a deadly sting; but Christ is a wise physician, and extracts a sovereign oil out of this scorpion, that heals the wound it makes." Sin is often followed by special judgments. But instead of these, the righteous receive special and peculiar blessings. Sin introduced death into the world. But the Christian finds the sting removed, and is enabled to conquer the last foe. Henceforth he is safe. This point past, sin can harm him no more. The judgment-day will be the great day of his acquittal and justification before the

universe; and his eternal abode will be in that world where there is no sin nor sorrow. Thus, by faith in Christ, are all the evils of sin removed or counteracted, and eternal life secured.

In this great work of subduing sin, each one of us must co-operate with the Holy Spirit, if we would be successful. Let us, then, look at some of the ways in which we may do this.

1. The Christian should keep his heart. He has foes within, as well as without. The heart is the home of sin, and the seat of all iniquity; and it must, after conversion, be the home of religion. It is said that among the heathen nations, when a beast was cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the priest examined was the heart; and if that was not sound and healthy, the sacrifice was rejected. So God looks first at the heart of those who make themselves an offering to him; and if that is wrong, the whole is rejected. It is necessary, therefore, that the heart be kept right toward God. We must watch it with a jealous eye, and examine it closely. "Blessed are the pure in heart." Matt. 5: 8.

2. Control your thoughts. If you would subdue your sinful propensities, you must not only watch your hearts, but control your thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his *thoughts*." Is. 55: 7. "The *thoughts* of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." Prov. 15: 26. Our Saviour, in giving a list of the polluting and abominable progeny of the natural heart, places "evil thoughts" at the head of the catalogue. Mark 7: 21. Here, then, is a point at which we must direct our most earnest and assiduous labors. The mind must be restricted and controlled, and the thoughts led to linger about those things only which are pure, and holy, and of good report.

3. Control the affections. If we would grow in grace, we must not suffer our affections to fasten upon unworthy and forbidden objects. Neither must they too strongly entwine around those objects which are good in their place. God demands our supreme affection; and we cannot divide our hearts between him and the world.

4. Break off sinful habits. After conversion, there are always some sins that lurk

unseen in the heart. The evil spirits are never wholly cast out, till death closes the conflict in victory. These remaining sins are like the remnants of the Canaanites, whom the children of Israel, contrary to the command of God, permitted to dwell in the holy land. They were scourges and afflictions to Israel. So if *you* do not make unceasing war against these stragglers, and drive them from you, "they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes." Josh. 23: 13.

5. Guard the tongue. It was said of the Rev. Richard Flavel, that his friends "never heard one vain word drop from his mouth." This noble tribute can be applied to but few others. The apostle James tells us, that if a man can bridle his tongue, he can govern his whole body. But generally, the tongue is the occasion of much sin, and a great hindrance to growth in grace.

6. Avoid temptation. No one is proof against temptation, and therefore a wise man will avoid it. Our hearts are like inflammable matter, which needs but a spark to set it on fire. The man who has powder about his

person, would not think it safe to handle fire. The half-reformed drunkard would not venture into a dram-shop, where the fumes of liquor and the sight of the bar-room furniture would at once arouse his yet unconquered appetite. Let us remember that we, even if Christians, are as yet but half reformed from our sinful habits, and must therefore avoid the haunts of sin and the lurking-places of evil. Nor must we forget that our own hearts may require but a spark to break forth into a blaze which it will require many tears of penitence to quench.

7. Avoid bad, and seek good company. Sinners are said to be "dead in trespasses and sin." This is especially true of notoriously hardened sinners; and we should avoid coming in contact with such. The Jews of old were polluted if they touched a dead body. The slightest quantity of blood, from a body in which the process of decay has commenced, coming in contact with a mere scratch upon one's finger, is sufficient to produce speedy death. Analogous to this is the deadly influence of those who are spiritually dead. Contact with such will introduce poison into your

soul, unless you sedulously guard against it. You must not only avoid sin, but shun all companions who would lead you into it, either by example or persuasion. Good men are often punished for being found in bad company. The Lord was offended with Jehoshaphat for associating with the impious Ahab. 2 Chr. 19: 2. "One sinner destroyeth much good." Eccl. 9: 18. "Corrupt company," said Lord Burleigh, "is more infectious than corrupt air." Remember, your neighbor, and even your bitterest enemy, can do you no greater injury than to lead you into sin. Select your companions from among the wise and good, and court those influences which tend to ennoble and purify the soul. "Tell me," says the Spanish proverb, "who are his friends, and I will tell you what he is."

8. Allow no trifling with sin. A wanton look of David, unsuppressed, in a few days resulted in murder. A weak fear of man in Peter, soon led to a profane denial of his Lord. How careful should we be, not to indulge even the thought of evil! And especially, how careful to avoid what are often termed *little sins!* It is by these that

the conscience is hardened, and prepared for worse deeds. Says Bishop Hopkins, "There is no surer way to know whether our consciences are dead and stupid, than to observe what impressions *small sins* make upon them; and if we are not careful to avoid all appearance of evil, if we are not so much troubled at the vanity of our thoughts and words as we have been formerly, we may conclude that our hearts are hardened, our consciences are stupified; for a tender conscience will no more allow of small sins than of great sins."

9. Cultivate a *fear* of sin. When the Empress Eudoxia sent to Chrysostom, an ancient Christian writer, a threatening message, he said to the messenger, "Go, tell her I fear nothing but sin!" On another occasion, when threatened with danger, he said, "I am ready to shed my blood, if I can only prevent sin." Colonel Gardiner, on receiving a challenge to fight a duel, returned for answer, "that though he was not afraid to fight, yet he was afraid to sin." "I am more afraid of doing wrong than of dying," said Baxter, when persecuted. These are the

Christians that grow in grace. These are the true heroes of the world,—men who fear nothing but to displease God. Would that their spirit were more widely diffused.

10. Be familiar with the Bible. I do not mean that you should read a chapter or two every day, or read the Bible through in course every year, or even commit it to memory. This is well, but there is something better. *Have a Bible in your heart.* When David described the righteous man, he said, "The law of his God is *in his heart;*" and he therefore could add, "none of his steps shall slide." Ps. 37: 31. God's commandment to his ancient people was, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be *in thine heart.*" Deut. 6: 6. The Bible will be of little advantage to us, unless we fix its precepts in the heart. The Jews bound the commands of God upon their foreheads and arms, on strips of parchment, and wrote them on their door-posts and gates; yea, they made long prayers, and fasted oft, and gave alms; but they did not write the law in their hearts, and their religion was vain and empty.

11. We should never forget our destiny.

We are soon to die; and this thought should urge us to throw off the shackles of sin. "The great hindrance to well living," says one, "is the expectation of living long." Let us then be more solicitous to live well than to live long. We are soon to enter upon the joys of heaven, if faithful; and this thought, also, should quicken us on. On one of the cells of the famous Tower of London, may be found the inscription, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" and on another, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." These words, engraved on the prison walls, probably by innocent victims of man's malignity, might well comfort and sustain them, and nerve their courage to endure for Christ's sake. So should we ever keep them before us, that we may remember that we are on our way to a glorious world.

"For ever with the Lord!
Amen; so let it be;
Life from the dead is in that word,—
'T is immortality.
Here in the body pent,
Absent from him I roam;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home."

Many Christians have found it of great advantage to write and adopt a set of rules or resolutions, to guide them in the path of duty. The following cannot fail to benefit those readers, who sincerely strive to grow in grace. Such must know that one of their greatest dangers is, forgetting, in the bustle of life, the pure precepts which should be their guide, and yielding to the influence of a worldly spirit. Take these rules, then, copy them upon paper, and, if possible, read them over at the close of each day; and as you read each, put the question to yourself, "Have I remembered this to-day?"

1. I must read the Bible, with a sincere desire to profit by it.

2. I must be faithful and sincere in my secret devotions.

3. I must strive to subdue every besetting sin.

4. I must do nothing I should be afraid to do, were it the last day of my life.

5. I must often think of death, and remember that the summons may come at any moment.

6. I must do all the good possible.

7. I must speak nothing but the truth, and speak evil of no one, unless for some good.

8. I must do nothing out of revenge.

9. I must avoid anger, and an unkind disposition.

10. I must suffer no pride.

11. I must improve my time.

12. I must see that in every action my example is such as not to injure others, but benefit them, if they imitate it.

These twelve rules, I presume, embrace the whole duty of man, so far as *practice* is concerned; of his *faith* I have already spoken.

But after we have done all, the grace of God must complete the work, or our labor is in vain. I have sometimes thought that it would be an easy thing to be a consistent pagan, were I surrounded by a pagan atmosphere; or a faithful Mohammedan, did I reside in Turkey; or even a good Roman Catholic, were Italy or Austria my home. It would be easy to make offerings, and visit mosques and cathedrals, and kneel at the call of the priest, to repeat a prayer, and keep fasts, and make pilgrimages, and afflict the body; all this can be done without the

assistance of God. But O, how difficult it is to be a good Christian,—to grow in grace from day to day! How difficult to subdue all "the rebel hosts of the heart," and unite them in the service of God! This is indeed rowing against wind and tide. The grace of God alone can enable us to do it.

"O, what a struggle wakes within,
When, in the spirit's solitude,
The tempting, treacherous thoughts of sin,
In all their luring smiles intrude!
'Tis then, my Father! then I feel
My nature's weakness; and, oppressed,
Like a poor trembling child I steal
To thee, for safety and for rest."

These beautiful sentiments of Bowring will receive the approbation of every Christian. The need of restraining and sanctifying grace is felt by all such. The remark of John Newton, when he saw one led to the gallows, "There goes John Newton, but for the grace of God," was an acknowledgement of this truth. So every converted sinner feels that wherein he differs from others, it is by the grace of God; and he knows that if he is ever saved, it will be by that same grace.

We are taught in the Bible that God purifies his people from sin. He frequently does this in the fiery furnace of affliction; but they come out of it as the pure gold. This caused Flavel to exclaim, in his peculiar way, "O, how many have been wheeled to hell in the chariot of earthly pleasures, while others have been whipped to heaven by the rod of affliction!" God sometimes shows them the deep depravity of their hearts, and causes them to mourn over their state. But, as the dews refresh the earth in the night, so the Christian receives the richest consolations of the Spirit in seasons of sorrow for sin, when all around is darkness. This is God's method to purify him; and he can say, with Job, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23: 18. If he has faith to lay hold on the promises, and look to Christ for strength, none of these things shall move him.

There is, then, no reason why we should yield to discouragements, if we do our duty. God is on our side, and the victory over sin is certain. Piety is a plant of celestial growth, and the great Cultivator will watch over and nurture it.

"To root it out, and wither it from earth,
Hell strives with all its strength, and blows with all
Its blasts; and sin, with cold, consumptive breath,
Involves it still in clouds of mortal damp;
Yet does it grow, thus kept, protected thus,
And bear the only fruit of true delight,
The only fruit worth plucking under heaven."

True, we may sometimes fall into error, and lose ground once gained; but let us still persevere. Says a distinguished English writer, in a recent letter to a young man, "There is precious instruction to be got in knowing that we are wrong. Let a man try faithfully, manfully, to be right, and he will grow daily more and more right. It is, at bottom, the condition on which all men have to cultivate themselves. Our very walking is an incessant falling,—a falling and a catching of ourselves before we come actually to the pavement. It is emblematic of all a man does." But while you persevere in your efforts, ever depend for success on the almighty arm. Never forget that God is with you, beholding the struggle. It is said that the celebrated Linnæus was so much impressed with this thought, that he wrote over the door of his library,—"Live inno-

cently,—God is present." Let it be your motto, also.

"I know that it will be well with me," were the dying words of Flavel. Doubtless, it is well with every Christian, after death. At the moment when he is released from the frail tabernacle of clay, he is also released from all sin, and thus triumphs over his great adversary. Now his foe is subdued, his contest ended, his victory won. Henceforth, the bitter curse of sin, which has been the subject of our thoughts, can reach his soul no more. All is forgiven, through the blood of Christ. Well may we exclaim, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Ps. 32: 42.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

The reward of piety—A scene in heaven—An exhortation to come to Christ—Danger of delay—Youth the best time—A word to the unconverted—A petition in behalf of the reader.

I HAVE endeavored, in my feeble way, to point out to my readers the punishment of sin, in this world and the world to come. And though, myself a sinner, I can but stammer about these solemn truths, yet I trust enough has been said to convince all that it is a terrible thing to transgress the law of God. Come with me now, and gaze upon another scene. Behold the reward of him who has come in deep penitence to the cross of Christ, and received salvation. Take your stand in the bright world of glory, where no sin is known, and no evil ever felt. Around you, in the distance, you behold worlds, and systems, and countless myriads of heavenly bodies, of every magnitude and degree of lustre, all

sweetly and harmoniously revolving about this grand central point. In all the music of the spheres, not a note of discord is heard. Before you is the burning throne of Jehovah, radiant with unapproachable glory; and the King of kings himself is in the midst of the golden city, imparting his own bliss, and glory, and excellence, to every being around him. An innumerable company of angels and archangels, of seraphim and cherubim, surround you on every hand, mingling the melodies of their harps and songs, and casting their crowns before their Lord. Celestial breezes fan you, and above, beneath, on every side, each object that meets your eye awakes delight. No sepulchres, no monuments sacred to the departed, no sickness, no pain are found throughout that wide realm. You behold the last tears of those who have passed through sorrow and tribulation wiped away, and their countenances, now burning with glory, you are told will never more be clouded by care and sorrow. Christ is there,—the Saviour of sinners, the Redeemer of the lost! O, is not this bliss too deep and too great for mortal to look

upon? And yet, youthful reader, this is *your* reward,—your *everlasting* reward,—if you now repent of your sins, and believe in Christ.

Come, then, and behold the Saviour of the lost. Come *now*. You feel that you are under a curse which you can never remove. Come to him who alone can remove it. Contemplate the immense sacrifice that has been made, and resolve that inasmuch as Christ has done so much for you, you will now do something for yourself, and for him. Do not stand at that cold distance, and look on the thrilling scene of Calvary like an idle spectator. Come near, where you can behold the dying victim; where you can witness his tears of mingled sorrow and pity; where you can catch the deep groan that is forced from his soul; where you can see his bosom throb with anguish. Come, sinner, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow. Come near, and hear the prayer that is breathed from his lips in behalf of his murderers; come, and witness the dying struggle. *You* have an interest in this solemn scene. It is *your* Saviour,—the innocent

victim of sin's malignity. This is the Lamb of God, who was wounded and bruised for *your* iniquities. This is the only blood that can wash away your sins. Tell me, can you not love him who first loved you? Will you not serve him who once condescended to serve you? Will you not honor him who died to save you from everlasting shame and contempt?

But I must again urge you to attend to this matter NOW. I know it is peculiarly the danger of the young to put off this subject, when an appeal is made to them. Are any of my readers now doing this? Let me warn you, that if you do this once, you will be led to do it again, and then again, and still again. The "convenient season" is never now, but always to-morrow, or next month, or next year. And will you postpone this duty to old age? Supposing you were sure of attaining to sixty, or eighty, or a hundred years, would you defer making your peace with God till the chills of age are upon you? Would you wait till your eye is dim, and you can no longer read the message of salvation? Would you wait till your ear

is dull, and you can no longer hear the preacher God has sent? Would you wait till your mind has become weak and superannuated, and all its faculties gone into decay? Say, would you wait till your heart has become hardened like the nether millstone, and your conscience cauterized as with a hot iron? Then delay not another day. Delay not the one thing needful to old age, nor to the bed of death. Childhood is the season to reform. Youth is the time to remember your Creator.

The devoted Baxter wrote a book, entitled, "Fifty reasons why a sinner ought to return to God without delay." Were all these arguments made to bear upon your heart, and as many more, it would not exhaust the motives of appeal. But after all, I fear there are some, upon whom every appeal and argument would fall as powerless as a sunbeam upon a desolate rock; or, if any impression be made, it would be as evanescent as the foam upon the water, or the dew upon the grass. If such there be, I must remind them that it will not always be thus. You *must* be moved by these things, sooner

or later; and moved deeply, too. They *will*, one day, gain admittance into your mind. O, that you may consider them while there is hope and mercy!

But if there are any who have determined to do their duty now (O, that there may be many such!) it is my earnest prayer that God would look in mercy upon them, and strengthen their good resolution, and enable them to persevere. May the Spirit be poured upon them. May the good Shepherd pity them, and stretch out his arms to receive them,

> "And gently, kindly lead them through
> Life's varied scenes of joy and gloom,
> Till evening's pale and pearly dew
> Tips the green sod that decks their tomb."

And, finally, may they be delivered for ever from the CURSE OF SIN, and experience all the joy and bliss of the SINNER SAVED.

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